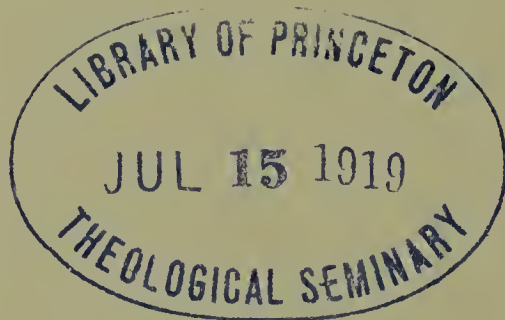


THE KINGDOM AND  
COMING OF CHRIST

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CLYTON A. MUNRO



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# THE KINGDOM AND COMING OF CHRIST

A STUDY OF MILLENNIALISM

BY  
CLAYTON A. MUNRO

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DEDICATED TO  
THE MEMORY OF MY PROMOTED  
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## PREFACE

**T**HE Great War with its severe shock has quickened interest in the millennial teaching of the second coming of Christ and the end of the world. To many there seems to be strong evidence to support the theory that a new dispensation is dawning in which Jesus will return to earth and assume control of the kingdoms of the world with the centre of his government at Jerusalem. Such a revelation of sovereign power would seem to be a quick remedy for all the moral and social ills of humanity and the establishment of righteousness on the earth. The premillennial plan of the ages so elaborately worked out binds God to clearly defined limits beyond which He cannot move, and outside of which apparently He has no jurisdiction. This plan the Almighty must follow with mathematical precision. It implies that He cannot shorten the days because they are set in thousand year ages, or dispensations; neither can He lengthen them, even in the exercise of long-suffering mercy, because the times are appointed.

In early life the author came in contact with millennialism, and it made a favorable impression on him. Later, in his ministerial work, he was confronted with it in an aggressive form. Noting its unfortunate effects he was led to a more careful and guarded study of its philosophy and theological bearing. This revealed the startling fact that in the premillennial system the gospel of Jesus is not considered the divine means for the conversion of the world.

In 1915 the Ministerial Association of Bermuda gave

the subject extended consideration. The author presented the closing paper of the discussion. It was there suggested that a comprehensive treatment of the whole system from the viewpoint of that address would be very valuable to Bible students.

These facts inspired the production of this book. It is prayerfully sent forth on its gospel mission in the full confidence that the Apostle was inspired by the Spirit of God when he wrote, "Wherefore JESUS is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for transgressors." (Heb. 7:25.)

CLAYTON A. MUNRO.

*Annapolis Royal, N. S.*

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**THE KINGDOM AND  
COMING OF CHRIST**



# THE KINGDOM AND COMING OF CHRIST

## CHAPTER I

### THE JEWISH CONCEPTION OF THE KINGDOM

**D**URING the time that intervened between the prophets, or the closing of the Old Testament canon, and the advent of Jesus, there grew up a large apocalyptic literature, which gave a literal and political interpretation to the Messianic prophecies. This Rabbinical interpretation influenced and moulded all the thinking of the people. They looked forward to the promised Messiah, as he who would come and deliver them from the yoke of the foreigner, restore to them the Davidic kingdom, and make them the dominant world power unto which all nations would flow. (Isa. 2:2.)

When Jesus entered upon his public ministry, this was the general expectation of the people. The fervid preaching of John the Baptist, from his startling text, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," aroused the whole country with an unprecedented enthusiasm, and multitudes of excited people flocked to his great meetings at the fords of the Jordan. They felt that now their long hoped for deliverance was to be accomplished. Even the most zealous and devoted disciples of John accepted the announcement of the approaching kingdom, as an assurance that they were to receive immediately their political liberty under their own king of the lineage of David. Did not their prophets foretell such a glorious consummation? Did not all their

schools teach and all their Rabbis agree that this was the meaning of all their prophets? Surely the glory of Israel was at hand.

Such was the mental condition and religious expectation of the people when Jesus began to preach and to teach the mysteries of the kingdom of God. This fact must be firmly held by the person who would understand and correctly interpret the preaching of Jesus and the peculiar effect it had upon both the populace and the rulers of the Jews. Their minds were so preoccupied with their political conditions, and the future of their country, that they unhesitatingly interpreted the declarations of Jesus to mean that they were now to be delivered from the hated Roman power, to become again a sovereign people. The intense enthusiasm which moved the multitudes to follow Jesus from village to village and country to city, was not so much from a sense of moral need, as an assurance of physical relief and a quickening of political hopes. The religious and political were so intertwined in the history of Israel and the thought of the people, that they could not think of a religious reformation apart from the political deliverance of their country from the bondage of a foreign power. From the beginning of their history, church and state were so combined that they rose and fell together. Consequently, to them religious reformation meant political restoration.

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All the teaching of Jesus was handicapped by these political hopes and aspiration of His hearers. They watched His words for any intimation that, at last, their political hopes and aspirations were to be realized. Owing to their predilections, His references to the kingdom conveyed quite a different meaning from what He intended. Every effort of His to re-



move the false impression only intensified it. So sure were they that He was the long expected deliverer of their country, that they attempted to "take Him by force and make Him king." (John 16:15.) Only His departure from their midst saved Him from this humiliation, of their misconceived patriotic designs. When their attempt was thus foiled, they became suspicious of His claims and character, and turned away from Him. So great was the defection that from that time "many of His disciples went back and walked no more with him." (John 6:66.)

Had He satisfied their national hopes, the rulers of the Jews would have received Him gladly, and would have followed Him loyally in a war of liberation against the Roman Cæsar, but when their hopes were disappointed, they turned against Him, and concentrated all their thought and energy upon the task of discrediting Him as an impostor. Having committed themselves to such a policy, they felt that they must prove their case at all hazards. This led them into the iniquitous expedient of bribing false witnesses to substantiate their envious accusations. Thus their political hopes, based upon a literal interpretation of their prophets, led them to deliver their Messiah to the Gentile Governor, with the vehement clamour "Crucify Him, crucify Him."

It requires no argument today to prove that these people through ignorance and envy committed the greatest crime in history, "when they murdered the Just and Holy One." Paul referred to their ignorance thus comprehensively, "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day they have fulfilled them in condemning

Him." (Acts 13:27.) Their error was due to a strictly literal interpretation of prophecy. This kind of interpretation so distorted their conception of the coming Messiah and the Messianic kingdom that they were not prepared to accept any person as the Messiah who was not pre-eminently a political leader and deliverer. This is why so many of the people were easily misled by the false Christs. Jesus cautioned His followers against such deceivers. (Matt. 24:5, 24.) These literal interpretations arousing and stimulating political hopes and aspirations were the chief barriers in the way of Jesus making Himself understood. Throughout His ministry He labored to remove these misconceptions and get the people to understand that His kingdom was not political but spiritual, He was not a rival of Cæsar or any earthly ruler, neither was His kingdom designed to displace the political power of any nation, nor yet to restore the national integrity and departed political glory of Israel. When Pilate questioned Him regarding His regal claims and designs He definitely stated, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered unto the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence." (John 18:36.)

He insisted that He had not come to assume any of the prerogatives either of an earthly king, or of a civil judge. When one said unto Him, "Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me," Jesus quickly replied, "Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?" (Luke 12:14.) When the ambitious Salome, thinking she had a political pull, sought the highest offices in the restored kingdom of Israel, for her two boys, James and John, Jesus rebuked her with

the statement, "Ye know not what ye ask." (Matt. 20:22.) And then He proceeded to turn their thoughts entirely away from the idea of political promotion. Later, when the twelve, during the Paschal Feast, were assembled with Jesus in the upper room, they got into a shameful altercation over their respective claims for the first place in the expected kingdom. Jesus rebuked them for their folly, and told them that the principles which governed His kingdom, were the reverse of those that govern the political rule of the nations of the world. (Luke 22:24-27.)

All these worldly ambitions and excited feelings were the result of the popular expectation that the Messiah was to be a temporal king enthroned at Jerusalem, and extending His political rule over all the nations. The deep despondency of His disciples over His crucifixion was due to the blasting of these political hopes. This is clearly shown by the conversation between the two disciples and the risen Christ on the way to Emmaus on the day of the resurrection. Cleopas explained their sorrow by relating the story of the crucifixion and adding, "We trusted that it had been He which should redeem Israel." (Luke 24:21.) The redemption he had in mind was not moral, but political.

The resurrection revived this buried hope. Though Jesus "opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures," (Luke 24:44, 45) and all that was "written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms," concerning Himself, this misconceived hope of the political restoration of the kingdom of Israel was ever uppermost in their minds. During the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension Jesus, as He associated with His disciples, was at pains to give them very particular instruc-

tions regarding the spiritual nature of His kingdom and the religious conditions that govern the citizens thereof. Yet when taking final leave from them He mentioned the coming of the Holy Spirit as the fulfillment of the promise of the Father, they seized upon this as the possible time of the hoped for restoration, and they broke in with the question, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?" Again the Lord administered a sharp rebuke for their literalism which closed their minds to the great realities of the spiritual verities of the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:5-8.)

The tenacity with which the chosen twelve held to the hope of the political restoration of the kingdom of Israel shows how deeply the Rabinnical interpretation of the prophets was rooted in the minds of the common people, as well as their rulers; and how it colored all their thinking and conceptions of the promised Messiah. Jesus was met by these false expectations at every turn. Any attempt on His part to correct the erroneous notions was charged against Him as evidence of His lack of loyalty to the law and institutions of Moses, and a traitor to His country. These ultra-patriotic sentiments based upon a literal interpretation of the prophets led to the crime of the crucifixion, and the final overthrow of Israel in the destruction of Jerusalem.

Even the pentecostal baptism did not fully remove the national aspirations of the disciples, nor make them infallible in judgment. This is very evident from the extended controversy over the question of circumcision which caused such sharp contention and division, not only among the Jewish Christians but between the apostles themselves. Even though Peter was the first

to carry the gospel to the Gentiles and defend their baptism to the Christian faith without circumcision, the old lingerings of the Jewish conception of the kingdom clung to him. When he went to Antioch where Paul was preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, he was led by those who came from James and separated himself from his Gentile brethren. "The other Jewish converts dissimulated likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas was also carried away with their dissimulation." (Gal. 2:13.) So serious was the defection that Paul withstood Peter to his face, because he was to be blamed.

This is evidence of the extreme difficulty of even Christian people breaking away from national misconceptions, and racial prejudices, and realizing that the gospel of Jesus has broken down the middle wall of partition so that in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but all are one in the unity of the faith and sonship of God the Father.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MILLENNIAL CONCEPTION OF THE KINGDOM

**T**HE premillennial school of Biblical interpretation teaches that there is yet to be a bodily reign of Christ on earth. The adherents of this school do not agree in the details of their theories. In fact there is such a wide divergence of opinion in the various sections that they are seriously at variance among themselves. The incompatible teachings of Millennial Dawnism, and so-called orthodox premillennialism are cases in point. They are unanimous, however, in their insistence upon what they call the literal interpretation of prophecy, and the theory that Christ must return to earth, live under physical conditions, and establish an earthly kingdom, with Jerusalem as His capital and the saints as His subjects.

The main features of this teaching are: first, the kingly administration of Jesus must be in bodily presence, not spiritual; second, it will be a literal reign on earth; third, Christ shall reign on the restored throne of David in Jerusalem; fourth, He shall set His face against the powers of darkness to reign over the united kingdoms of the world (this, of course, would imply a war of subjugation, and possibly a success only partial); fifth, His reign and kingdom shall last for a thousand years.

On all these points, the millennialists agree with the Jewish conception of the kingdom. Some of the millennial writers even appeal to the Rabbinical writings

to prove their position. W. E. B. in his book, *Jesus Is Coming*, page 37, says:

Jewish writers throughout the Talmud hold that this millennium will be chiefly characterized by the deliverance of the Jews from all their enemies, recovery of Palestine, and the literal reign of Messiah in unequalled splendor therein.

Premillennialists hold much in common with the Jews, but also that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Messiah; that He is to return to earth and overthrow Satan, all ungodly government and lawlessness, having the church, with Himself as sovereign, Jerusalem as capital, regathered and converted Israel as the centre; and all nations included in a universal, world-wide kingdom of pure and blessed government.

It will be noted that the only real difference between this putting of the premillennial conception of the kingdom, and the conception of the Jews is that the latter did not accept Jesus as the Messiah. But why did the Jews reject Jesus and His Messianic claims? They at first rallied around Him with marked enthusiasm, acknowledged Him as the Messiah, and were ready, even anxious, to proclaim Him king. He was even promised all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. (Matt. 4:9, 10.) But when He rejected the temptations and repudiated all claims and intentions of an earthly kingship, they became critical and suspicious of Him. They were looking for a Messiah to come and establish an earthly kingdom. He came down from heaven to bring to earth a heavenly kingdom. They had drifted so far from the moral and spiritual ideals of their law and prophets, that they could not conceive of any kingdom but one founded on the political restoration of Israel. When He disappointed their expectations, they rejected Him and had Him put to death as a malefactor.

The premillennialists tell us that the Jews were perfectly correct in their expectation of a political Messiah, anointed of God, to restore the fallen kingdom of Israel, re-establish the throne of David, and *literally* reign in person over all the nations of the earth with Jerusalem as His capital city. Their fatal mistake was in not understanding the chronology of their prophets. Had they understood the line of cleavage in the prophecies between the suffering Messiah and the glories of the kingdom, they would have known that the first advent was not to restore the kingdom of Israel, but to gather out of the world a people for His name, and at the second coming He would establish the throne of His might in Jerusalem.

This is the discovery made by the millennialists. While they retain the literal interpretations of the Rabbinical writings regarding the political restoration of the political kingdom of Israel, they bisect the prophecies and apply the references to the sufferings of Messiah to the first advent; and all references to the kingdom, to the second coming. But such a rehabilitation of the old Jewish conception of the kingdom, even though the old garment is patched up with the new cloth of the Messiahship of Jesus, does not improve the situation. The facts remain that the Jews failed to discern any evidence in their prophets of a predicted second coming of the Messiah to establish His kingdom, and that Jesus repudiated absolutely all claims to political leadership. It has been shown (Chapter I), that every time either the Jews or His chosen disciples approached Him with any suggestions or questions regarding His political claims, or the restoration of Israel, He rebuked them with an emphatic declaration that His kingdom was not of this world. The



disparity between the teaching of Jesus regarding the kingdom, and their interpretation of the prophets was so great, that the Jews could not reconcile the two, and therefore they refused to accept Jesus as the Messiah. If their only mistake, or their chief mistake, was a failure to distinguish between the purposes of the first and the second coming of the Messiah, it would not only have been an easy matter, but a very reasonable thing for Jesus to have intimated to them that their conception of the kingdom was correct, but they had misunderstood the time or dispensation in which the prophecies were to be fulfilled. But, on the contrary, He rejected their whole conception of the kingdom, and endeavored to teach them that the kingdom of heaven was a kingdom of spiritual fellowship, and of moral character. He does not even intimate that faith in Himself would assure the restoration of the political glory of the kingdom of Israel.

Everywhere He urges the fact that repentance toward God, and faith in Himself as the one whom God had sent would give them everlasting life, and bring them into such spiritual relations with the Father and the Son that they would enter into the heavenly kingdom.

He opened His ministry with the text of John the Baptist, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." (Matt. 3:2. Comp. Matt. 4:17.) To inquiring Nicodemus He said, with divine emphasis, "Verily, verily, I say unto you except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3, N. T. Gr.) In the sermon on the Mount, when contrasting the material with the spiritual He said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6:33.)

In all His teaching of the kingdom, He aimed to turn the thoughts of the people away from earthly ambitions, and political aspirations, and centre them upon the spiritual and eternal verities of pure and undefiled religion. The inducements which He presented to them were not material gains, or the glories of an earthly kingdom, but moral salvation and a place with Him in heaven at the right hand of God. It took the chosen disciples of Jesus a long time to break away from their Jewish conceptions and get the viewpoint of Jesus. In fact, it was not until after He ascended unto the Father, and sent the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, in pentecostal power, that they received the vision of the purely spiritual nature of the kingdom of God. Paul puts this divine conception of the kingdom in this concise form, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and joy and peace in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 14:17.)

The Jews' mistake was not that they misunderstood the time the Messiah would establish His kingdom, but that they had an entirely erroneous conception of the nature and purpose of that kingdom. They were perfectly correct in their expectations that the Messiah at His first advent would establish His kingdom with Jerusalem as the starting point, but they were entirely astray when they thought that kingdom must consist of the restoration of the political power and prestige of Israel. Both John the Baptist and Jesus from the beginning proclaimed, "The kingdom of God is at hand." (Matt. 3:2 and 4:17.) "And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come," He answered them and said, 'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say Lo here! or lo, there! for, behold, the king-

dom of God is within you.'” (Luke 17:20, 21.) It was already in their midst. The kingdom of God was the establishment of pure and undefiled religion in the world. It was even then at work like “the leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal.” When Jesus was preparing the disciples for His ascension, He said, “Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” (Luke 24:46-49.)

These disciples waited at Jerusalem in fellowship and prayer for ten days. “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place . . . and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 2:1-4.)

Then and there began the full preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, and on that day three thousand were converted to God and baptized. Thus Jerusalem was made the starting point of the kingdom of God, and from the Holy City radiated its light and power. This is the kingdom that was ordained of God to dominate the world. When the disciples listened to Jesus as He renewed the promise of the Father in that solemn moment on Mount Olivet, they broke in with the question of politics. It was so irrelevant and such a sad exhibition of their materialism that Jesus quickly brushed the question aside with the sharp rebuke: “It is not for you to know the times and seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.”

To turn them back to the great question of the kingdom He was presenting to them and concentrate their minds upon their responsibility as citizens of that kingdom of God, He quickly added, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:1-8.) Not only was Jerusalem the starting point for the extension of the kingdom, but the Jews were the chosen people to disseminate the truth of the kingdom to the uttermost part of the world. Paul writing to the Gentile Christians at Ephesus reminds them that the Jews formed the foundation of the kingdom and that they were fellow citizens. He says, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit." (Eph. 2:19-22.) In this passage the basic idea is that of the kingdom in which all Christians are fellow citizens. The transition to the figures of the house, and family life, is very striking and impressive, but in both the kingdom and the family, the apostles and prophets are the foundation with Christ Jesus as the chief corner stone.

The failure of the rulers of the Jews to recognize this spiritual nature of the kingdom of God, so clearly taught in the law of Moses, the psalms and the prophets, resulted in the crucifixion on Calvary's Cross of their long expected Messiah. Their ignorance was not

of a prospective second coming of Christ, but of His real character and mission, and the essential nature of the kingdom He came to establish. Paul writing of the lack of the spiritual perception of the Jews says, "Howbeit, we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, that comes to naught; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." (1 Cor. 2:6-8.)

Seeing that the mistake of the Jews had such disastrous results, is there not a danger that the rehabilitation of Jewish literalism regarding the nature and principles of the kingdom of God, will prove a deterrent to the extension of the gospel as an all powerful evangelizing force in the world?

We would not insinuate that millennialists assume the attitude of the Jews toward Jesus as the Messiah, nor yet that their conception of the millennial kingdom coincides with the Jewish conception of the Messianic kingdom. Millennialists fully accept the Messiahship of Jesus and the great Christian doctrine of atonement and salvation by faith. Therefore, they have a devout and pious Christian sentiment and spirit. And yet to them the gospel is only an intermediary dispensation between the Mosaic economy and the inauguration of the millennium by the second coming of Jesus. The character and form of this intermediary dispensation was determined by the perfidy of the Jewish hierarchy which rejected their king and expelled him from the earth by a violent death. This expulsion left the devil in charge of the world, as its prince and god. The gospel was not intended, in the divine plan, for the con-

version of the world. In fact, they see no hope for any real improvement of world conditions under the present dispensation: as Paul said, "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." (2 Tim. 3:13.) This world which "lieth in the wicked one" (1 Jno. 5:19 R. V.) must go from bad to worse, until Jesus comes a second time to change the world order and set up His kingdom. They accept the present world crisis as indubitable proof of their theory, and see no solution of the world's social, industrial, and political problems, except by a personal reign of Jesus on the earth as king of the nations. In the autumn of 1917, a number of eminent preachers of London, "under a profound impression of the momentous nature of the present crisis," were convinced that "the Lord is at hand" and issued a statement of their views in seven brief articles of faith. The fifth reads, "That all human schemes of reconstruction must be made subsidiary to the second coming of the Lord, because then all nations will be subject to His rule."

There is no doubt of the sincerity of these men, and all devout Christians who agree with them. Such a statement challenges attention chiefly as an offered solution of the present crisis. There is not a word regarding the efficacy of the gospel as the power of God unto salvation. No appeal to men to observe and do the will of God as revealed in the Holy Word. The only hope for the world is the second coming of Christ as ruler of the nations. But suppose this expected coming of the divine king is delayed? Suppose these prophets have not read aright the signs of the times; or like the millennialists of a thousand years ago, have misjudged "the times and the seasons which the Lord hath placed in His own power"? In such a contingency, "Is

there no balm in Gilead?" Have these men nothing to offer as an immediate remedy for this world's sores? We study their document in vain for the slightest intimation of any relief from any source for the evils that exist, except the predicted second coming of Christ. If these prophets have reliable credentials to prove that they have a special divine illumination that protects them from all possibility of error, their pronouncement may be accepted without question, but they claim to base their conclusions and expectations upon the prophecies of the Bible. These prophecies are open to all for examination. It is our duty to search them carefully in the full light of the Gospel to see if these things are true. Our purpose is to study the millennial claims in the light of the Holy Scriptures and well authenticated history.

We cannot help noting at this point a disagreement between the proclamation of the ten London preachers and the position of Jesus. When one of the disciples asked Jesus, "Are there few that be saved?" the Master gave this decisive answer, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." (Luke 13:24.) In other words, your concern is not whether few or many are saved, but see to it, by the exercise of all your energies after godliness that you enter the strait gate yourself. When just before the ascension Jesus renewed to the disciples the promise of the Father, they asked "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power: But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea

and in Samaria, and even unto the uttermost parts of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8.)

That is when they wanted to know the secrets of God, and were anxious to fix times and seasons, Jesus in effect told them that this was none of their affair. They were to seek divine qualification to preach the gospel, and were now sent to bear this healing balm for the world's wounds unto "even the uttermost parts of the earth." They were not called to fix times and seasons, but to do their duty to the world by preaching righteousness and seeking lost men.

This proclamation overlooks the gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus, and attempts to fix "the times and the seasons which the Father hath placed in His own power." While it does not attempt to set the day nor even the year, as some have, it says, "I. That the present crisis points towards the close of the times of the Gentiles. II. That the revelation of our Lord may be expected at any moment," which certainly is fixing the time as now present.

Whatever may be the future history of the world, there are some fundamental facts of the gospel, and personal religious experience that must be held with all tenacity. To yield these would undermine the assurance of individual salvation, and destroy the effectiveness of the gospel appeal of repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. These facts of faith and experience are outlined in what Martin Luther called "the little gospel,"—namely, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not His son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (John 3:16, 17.)



For two thousand years men and women accepting that gospel have been made children of God, and the social life of nations has been transformed. The extension of this saving power through the gospel has given us our religious and civil liberties, our free Christian institutions, even created the Christian civilization we so much prize. What might not the gospel have accomplished for the world if it had been fully believed? Or, if the nations which accepted Christianity had been true to its teachings?

## CHAPTER III

### THE THRONE OF DAVID

ON the very threshold of the gospel we are met with the angelic announcement to the Virgin Mary of the sovereignty of Jesus. "The Lord God shall give Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1:32, 33.)

This was the renewal of the divine promise made unto David, by the prophet Nathan, in connection with the king's decision to build a house for the Lord. The millennialists insist that this promise must be literally fulfilled. That is, the political throne of David in Jerusalem must be restored, Jesus must return and occupy that throne as a temporal king, and reign over united Israel and, through them, over all the nations of earth. The materialistic nature of these claims is so revolutionary that they demand very careful examination. In order to get the exact bearing of the scriptural meaning of the promise, we will quote the original message in full:

And when the days be fulfilled and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for-

ever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever. (2 Sam. 7: 12-16.)

The seed of David, to whom these promises directly referred, was his son Solomon who immediately succeeded him and built the temple at Jerusalem during his peaceful reign. The millennialists give this prophecy an absolute and unconditional interpretation. That is, that the political throne of David was unconditionally and absolutely established as an eternal sovereignty. It mattered not how far the seed or successors of David might depart from the law of the Lord, the everlasting stability of the political or earthly throne of David was irrevocably fixed. But David himself did not so understand the promise. This is made unmistakably clear in his charge to Solomon:

And David said to Solomon, "My son, as for me it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the Lord my God: but the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. Behold, a son shall be born unto thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build an house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever.'

"Now, my son, the Lord be with thee; and prosper thou and build the house of the Lord thy God, as He hath said to thee. Only the Lord give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, THAT THOU MAYST KEEP THE LAW OF THE LORD THY GOD. THEN SHALT THOU PROSPER, IF THOU TAKEST HEED TO FULFIL THE STATUTES AND JUDGMENTS WHICH THE LORD CHARGED MOSES WITH CONCERNING ISRAEL: BE STRONG AND OF GOOD COURAGE; DREAD NOT NOR BE DISMAYED." (1 Chron. 22: 7-13.)

The condition for the prosperity and stability of the throne and kingdom of Israel is the keeping of the law of the Lord. "If thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the Lord charged Moses with concerning Israel." Both the statutes and judgments are specifically mentioned. The law and statutes of Moses all carried clearly defined penalties for disobedience and this divine law always has been administered by God with even justice. With God there is no respect either for persons or for nations.

Solomon clearly recognized the fact that the permanency of his throne depended upon the fidelity of himself and his people to the law of the Lord. This he definitely stated in his prayer at the dedication of the temple. "Therefore now, Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying, 'There shall not fail thee a man to sit upon the throne of Israel; so that (or only if) thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me.'" (1 Kings 8:25.)

In our study of God's provisions for Israel and the world, we must not lose sight of the fact that God's government is preëminently moral. The political was organized incidentally as a temporary expedient. Even then the political is surcharged with, and controlled by, the moral principles of the law of righteousness. The political organization of Israel as a kingdom was not the primitive arrangement of God. It was merely an expedient that grew out of the people's revolt from the theocracy. In all the control of the political fortunes of Israel, the religious life predominated. When the people forsook the altars of Jehovah, they suffered, and became victims of their idolatrous neighbors. When they returned unto the Lord, they were restored and

strengthened. Thus the theocracy overshadowed the monarchy, to protect and control the kingdom, under a system of clearly defined laws.

Failure to appreciate these facts leaves the casual reader of the prophets open to the materialistic interpretation insisted upon by the millennialists. But a comparison of this interpretation with the well known history of Israel and the Jews causes the careful student to hesitate. If we isolate the original prediction and read it as an absolute promise, it appears as though there must be a restoration of the monarchy of Israel under the returned Messiah, the promised seed of David. But when we turn to history, we find that there did fail a man of the seed of David to sit upon the throne of Israel. The Babylonian captivity made a serious break in the line of succession. Even though there was a partial restoration under the Maccabees, Judah was never perfectly free from foreign domination. Though Herod occupied the throne when Jesus came, he was a vassal of Rome, and a king in name more than in fact. The sovereign power was vested in the Roman praetor, who really took precedence over the king. After the destruction of Jerusalem, this nominal kingship passed away and for nearly two thousand years there has been no king of any kind at Jerusalem. This break is fatal to the millennial interpretation of the promise, "There shall not fail thee a man to sit upon thy throne forever." S

Another part of the prediction was: "Thy house and thy kingdom shall be established forever." The house and kingdom of David as a political sovereignty passed away long, long ago. Therefore, if we are confined to a rigidly unconditional and literal interpretation of the promises made to David and the Virgin

Mary, which demands an earthly kingdom under the rule of a scion of the house of David, the whole prediction breaks down utterly. Under this interpretation, there is no conceivable way of logically or historically vindicating these prophecies.

The promise as taken by the millennialists is "There shall not fail thee a man to sit upon thy throne forever." The claim that Jesus at His second coming will restore the kingdom of Israel, and assume the throne of His father David, at Jerusalem, in a literal reign of power, does not, it cannot, dispose of the fact that for thousands of years there has not been a kingdom of Israel, nor a house of David. Suppose according to the expectations of the millennialists, Christ should come and restore the throne and kingdom of David, that restoration could not be retroactive. There would still remain this hiatus, in the succession covering thousands of years. "Forever" and "without end," admit of no such hiatus.

Furthermore, the attempt to satisfy the terms of the promise by a millennial reign is as great a failure, because while it does not bridge the chasm of the past, it has only a limited future. The millennial interpretation predicts that at the end of the thousand years of glorious Messianic reign on the throne of David, Satan will be loosed from his chains and will defeat the world kingdom of the millennial reign. What then will become of the promise, "I will establish forever," "of thy kingdom there shall be no end"?

From whatever angle we consider the literal and unconditional interpretation of these predictions, we are compelled to pronounce it wholly untenable and misleading.

The millennialists insist on the alternatives: either

Christ must come again and restore the throne of David, or God has broken His covenant. But are we confined to these alternatives? May there not be another interpretation that is much more consistent with the whole burden of scriptural teaching and the facts of history? We are estopped from accepting the millennialist theory because it fails to recognize the facts of history, is out of harmony with human experience, and gives only a partial view of the prophecies of the Scriptures. Unless we can obtain an explanation that will be consistent with all interests involved and produce a complete harmony between prophecy and history, it is much wiser and safer to say "we do not know," and reserve judgment, than to attempt to force upon the Scriptures an interpretation that violates the indisputable facts in the development of the nations and the religious experiences of the people of God.

We believe there is a reasonable and scriptural interpretation of the facts concerning the throne of David that meets all the demands of history and prophecy. The fundamental fact to be firmly held is that the permanency of the political house and kingdom of David was conditioned upon the fidelity with which his sons and successors and the people of Israel observed the law of the Lord. David's charge to Solomon was, "I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore and show thyself a man; and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, and His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: that the Lord may continue His word which He spake concerning me, saying, 'If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all

their heart, and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee,' said He, 'a man on the throne of Israel.'" (1 Kings 2:2-4.)

These conditions were not only comprehensive and explicit, but they were emphatic. They were also familiar to all the teachers and people of Israel. Not only were they read and expounded in the holy sanctuary, but they were incorporated into their songs of popular praise. The people sang, "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David: He will not turn from it: of the fruit of thy body will I set up thy throne, If thy children will keep my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne forever." (Psalm 132:11.)

Therefore, the promise to establish the political throne of David forever was not made absolute and independent of all moral considerations. To regard it so is to do violence to the moral government of God. The endurance of the kingdom and throne was conditioned upon the spiritual character of the king and his people as proved by their whole-hearted obedience to the revealed law of God. It is a well authenticated fact that when Israel obeyed the word of the Lord, he prospered and overcame all his enemies. But when he turned to other gods and practiced abominations, the glory of the Lord departed from him, and his kingdom was overrun and subdued by his foes. Though Solomon's reign began in great glory and promise, in his later years his heart was turned away from the Lord his God, and under his son and successor, Rehoboam, his kingdom was disrupted. That was the beginning of the end. Idolatry with its attendant evils waxed worse and worse until the divided kingdoms were destroyed. First the kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians, and later the king-



dom of Judah by the Babylonians ; and the people were carried into captivity from which only a small remnant ever returned.

When the party of the second part of a covenant violates the conditions of the agreement, the party of the first part is relieved of his obligations, unless it be to impose the penalties stipulated in the contract. To condone the violation of the covenant would make the party of the first part an accomplice after the fact with the violator, and a sharer of his guilt. When the king and people of Israel, the parties of the second part, had persisted for centuries against all the compassion, long-suffering, and forgiveness of God, the party of the first part, to violate all the provisions of the divine covenants, there was nothing left for the Most High, but to withdraw His protecting hand and permit the prescribed penalty to fall upon the transgressors. The prophet Ezekiel makes this clear. (Ezekiel, chs. 18 and 33.) With Ezekiel agreed all the prophets. The burden of the prophecies is a bitter wail over the disobedience of the people, and the consequent destruction they were courting, accompanied with the radiant promises of prosperity and great glory if they would repent of their sins and return to God. The Lord by the mouth of Hosea made this terse but urgent appeal, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help." (Hosea 13:9.) To Ezekiel the Lord said, "Say unto them, 'As I live,' saith the Lord God, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?'" (Ezek. 33:11.) After struggling long to save backsliding Israel, the Lord said, "Ephraim is joined to his idols: let him alone." (Hosea 4:17.)

As the final destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews to be without a country or a king, drew near, Jesus placed the whole responsibility for the approaching disaster upon the wayward and unrepentant people. On His last visit to the Holy City, when the multitudes followed Him with such loud acclaim, spreading their garments in the way, waving the palm branches of victory, and shouting their praise unto God "for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, 'Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven and glory in the highest,'" Jesus looking upon the Holy City from the Mount of Olives, was deeply moved by its rejection of God. From His point of vantage, He looked into the future and saw the armies of the enemy laying it waste, and He wept. With the tears of sorrow coursing down His cheeks, He broke forth in this sad lament:

If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace: but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation. (Luke 19: 37-44.)

During Passover week, Jesus spent His days in the Holy City teaching and working in the temple, in a last great effort to turn the people to God and save them from the pending disaster. When taking His final leave from the people, He preferred this serious charge against them, "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them ye shall

scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom you slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you all these things shall come upon this generation.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thee together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, but ye would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate.” (Matt. 23: 34–38.) Special attention is called to the conditions, “But ye would not,” and “Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.” The responsibility for the ignorance and refusal was with the people. For centuries God by the mouth of His prophets and by the continuous manifestations of His grace and power, labored to save Israel from the dire disaster of idolatry and immorality, which they were bringing upon themselves, but they would not be saved. When God sent His son in a final effort, and thus exhausted the content of mercy, and grace, they rejected all overtures of love, and crucified their Lord. Therefore, the overthrow of the reigning house of David, and the absolute destruction of the kingdom of Israel were not due to any failure or unfaithfulness on the part of God, but the inevitable result of the people’s own rebellion against God and His law: according to the warning of Isaiah, “If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat of the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel ye shall be devoured by the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” (Isa. 1: 19, 20.)

We now return to the angel’s promise to the Virgin

Mary with which this chapter opens. Those who adopt the political and materialistic theory that Christ must come again and restore the throne of David are confronted with grave difficulties. This literal interpretation instead of extricating them from the perplexities of the passage, only multiplies their problems. The attitude of Jesus toward the political aspirations of the Jews shows that He did not accept the promise in a political sense. The people, as has been shown above, who favored His Messianic claim expected Him to take immediate steps to reclaim the throne of David. But Jesus repudiated all claims to political prerogatives and powers. He carefully avoided everything, whether of word or act, that would indicate any aspiration toward an earthly throne, even with spiritual and heavenly prerogatives. He quickly resented and frustrated every proposition to make Him king. He was always particular to show loyal deference to the existing sovereign power, even though it was that of the Romans, so hated by His people. He even directed that the disputed tribute be paid according to the Roman requirements, saying, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and unto God the things that are God's." (Matt. 22:16-21.) On one occasion He performed a miracle to obtain the tribute money for Himself and Peter, to avoid offending the Roman law. (Matt. 17:24-27.) He gave no intimation that then or at any future time, He expected to assume an earthly throne, displace all existing rulers and dominate the world of politics by regal power. If God's plan of the ages looks forward to this materialistic consummation of the gospel and work of Jesus, it is strange that He did not make some clear reference to it and intimate that the people's interpretation of the prophecies was

well founded, but they had mistaken the dispensations. But nothing of the kind appears in all His teaching. He constantly discourages the popular idea that the Messiah was to restore the departed political power and glory of Israel, and is absolutely silent about another dispensation when this has been consummated.

These facts force the conclusion that there must be a profounder meaning to this promise than that contained in the millennial interpretation. In the interpretation of the holy scriptures, it is necessary to beware of the temptation to select isolated passages, without regard for their connections and atmosphere, and appropriate them to support some cherished theory or dogma. By such a method, scriptural texts can be found to support any conceivable theory that a religious adventurer may wish to propound. It has been said, "The Bible is like a violin, you can get any tune out of it you like. All depends on how you finger the strings." But the strings must be fingered correctly to produce the perfect harmony of music. In like manner, the texts of scripture must be truthfully handled and rightly interpreted to maintain the harmony of the Word of God, and learn its profounder moral and spiritual lessons. That is, the Bible must be considered as a whole, and each passage studied in the light of its connections, the history that lies behind it, all parallel passages and connections, and the political, social, moral, and religious atmosphere in which it was conceived. Such a careful study reveals the fact that scriptural prophecy has a profounder meaning than the literal terms and political connections would indicate. It is this profounder meaning that must be sought to give these Messianic predictions and promises their proper bearing. Those who flout the pro-

phetic imagery and spiritual thought and content do serious violence to the word of the Lord.

The prophecy of the angel to the Virgin Mary is distinctly Messianic, and describes the Messianic offices of Jesus rather than His political prospects. It has a much profounder meaning than could be contained in a promise of the restoration of the political throne of David. By tracing out this messianic meaning, our vision of the deep things of God is broadened and clarified, and we can see more clearly how God by types and symbols revealed the mysteries of religion.

The throne of David was typical of the messianic throne, even as David, himself, was a type of Jesus. The predictions and promises made to and of David were used by accommodation to describe the offices and prerogatives of Jesus, as the anointed Son of God. This method of accommodation was generally recognized by the New Testament writers. Matthew uses it very freely when elucidating the messianic prophecies. For instance, when relating the return of Joseph, and the young child Jesus, from the sojourn in Egypt he says, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying, 'Out of Egypt have I called my son.'" (Matt. 2:15.) This is simply an accommodation of the prophet Hosea's historic reference to the deliverance of Israel, under Moses, from the Egyptian bondage. The complete passage as given by the prophet is, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." (Hosea 11:1.) Again, when Joseph came from Egypt into Galilee, Matthew says, "He came and dwelt in the city of Nazareth that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, 'He shall be called a Nazarene.'" What prophets predicted that the Messiah should be

called a Nazarene? This question has been very perplexing to commentators.

The best explanation of the origin of this name appears to be that which traces it to the word *Netzer*, in Isaiah 11: 1.—the small, *twig, sprout, or sucker*, which the prophet there says “shall come forth from the stem (or rather stump) of Jesse the branch which should fructify from his roots.” The little town of Nazareth — mentioned neither in the Old Testament nor in Josephus — was probably so-called from its insignificance — a weak twig in contrast to a stately tree; and a special contempt seemed to rest upon it, . . . over and above the general contempt in which all Galilee was held, from the number of Gentiles that settled in the upper territories of it, and, in the estimation of the Jews, debased it. Thus in the providential arrangement by which our Lord was brought up in the insignificant and opprobrious town called *Nazareth*, there was involved, first, a local humiliation; next an allusion to Isaiah’s prediction of His lowly, twig-like upspringing from the branchless, dried up stump of Jesse; and yet further, a standing memorial of that humiliation which, “the prophets” in a number of the most striking predictions, had attached to the Messiah. (Jamison, Fausset and Brown, *Bible Commentary*.)

Thus, a study of the quotations of the Evangelists shows that they followed the rule of accommodation by appropriating Old Testament prophecies to New Testament incidents and facts, a common practice among all New Testament writers, as well as Rabbinical interpreters. By this rule, Matthew could appropriate Hosea’s reference to the deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt under Moses, to the bringing of the young child Jesus out of Egypt by his father Joseph. (*Comp.* Hosea 11:1 Matt. 2:14, 15.) This method of New Testament writers must be recognized by all candid students and Biblical interpreters. Apply this rule to

the passage in question and instead of its demanding the bodily presence of Jesus, seated on the temporal throne of David and reigning in an earthly kingdom, it implies a messianic sovereignty that can never be overthrown, but must abide forever and ever.

The prophet Isaiah comes a little closer to our subject. The messianic prophet definitely describes to his generation the nativity of Jesus and the character of His government and kingdom. He says:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulders: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace, there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order and establish it with judgment and with justice from hence forth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. (Isaiah 9:6, 7.)

In no possible way can this prophecy be correctly applied to an earthly political kingdom of Christ, because it is a direct and definite prediction of the first advent. Christ was born true to this prophecy, fulfilled His earthly ministry, and ascended unto the Father without occupying the throne of David in Jerusalem. Even the principle of accommodation will not provide for such a restoration of the throne of David as is claimed by the millennialists. First, because the throne and government were to be established at His first advent; and secondly because it is a moral government that is described by the prophet, to be administered by the divine son of God, under the moral law. It was of this kingdom that Jesus spoke when He said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." (Matt. 6:33.) The gospel of Jesus is the



divine exposition of the laws of this kingdom, which are codified in the sermon on the mount. This kingdom established on earth by the incarnation of Jesus, is administered from the glorified throne in heaven, of which the throne of David was the only fitting earthly type.

This interpretation is strongly supported by Peter in his pentecostal sermon. That we may get the full bearing of this inspired exposition, it will be necessary to quote the entire passage. After explaining to the amazed people, that the spiritual demonstration for which they could not account, was the result of the outpouring of the spirit of God predicted by the prophet Joel, and rehearsing the known facts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, he turned to the profounder spiritual significance of this divine movement, with this serious and earnest declaration:

Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath unto him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens but he saith himself, "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool." Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. (Acts 2:29-36.)

The only logical conclusion to be derived from this passage is that the throne of David, here described, is

at the right hand of God in the heavens, to which David himself had not ascended. An attempt to place it in any lower realm robs the exalted language of the inspired apostle of its point and power. He describes a transaction that had been completed, the closing of which made Pentecost possible and precludes all possibility of taking his language as a prediction of a transaction which after two thousand years is still future. The triumph of the resurrection of Jesus, and His exaltation to the right hand of God, were the irrefutable proofs of His messiahship. The unmistakable evidence of this exaltation was the shedding forth of the Holy Ghost, which that day had produced such wonderful results. This place at the right hand of God was the throne of David mentioned by Peter. From this throne Jesus, as the Sovereign Lord, assumed the moral government of the world. “*To sit on the right hand of God* means to be raised to the highest dignity and power in the realms of glory, and administer the laws of both worlds.” (Dr. A. Clark, *Commentary*.) This dignity and supreme sovereign power Jesus claimed for Himself, when He told His disciples, “All power is given unto me both in heaven and in earth.” (Matt. 28:18.)

The throne of David was typical of the throne of God. Although David's throne was political and national, it represented to the people of Israel the divine sovereignty of the kingdom, inasmuch as David was anointed by God to be king over God's people and to administer his sovereign powers as God's servant. The national throne, though the seat of the nation's ruler, when he is administering the powers of the king, represents the nation's sovereignty. It is in this figurative or representative sense that we usually speak of the

throne. For instance, when we speak of the throne of England we usually mean the seat of the sovereign authority and power of the British Empire.

It is also in this figurative sense that we use the phrase, *the throne of God*, meaning the seat of the sovereign authority and power of the Almighty ruler of the universe. From the beginning of the world to the organization of Israel into a nation, the form of government by which God ruled His people was theocratic. The theocracy continued under the judges until the people became uneasy and insisted upon having a king like the neighbouring nations. "The thing was evil in the eyes of Samuel, and he prayed unto the Lord." "And the Lord said unto Samuel, 'Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.'" (1 Sam. 8: 6, 7.) Thus back of the throne of David, was the throne of the theocracy.

The Jews (or children of Israel) as the chosen people of God constituted this theocracy during the Mosaic dispensation. On the throne of this theocracy, David was representative king. When the Jewish race ceased to be the theocracy, by the taking of the kingdom of God from them, that kingdom was established on a new basis, by which every man, Jew or Gentile, was admitted to form part of the kingdom of faith. On the throne of that theocracy sits Jesus, the eternal successor of David. (*Wheddon's Commentary*, Luke 1: 32, 33.)

In this case, also, Jesus could say, "Before David was I am." The throne of David was only an earthly manifestation of the throne of the theocracy, and represented the Messianic throne, or the sovereign authority and power of Jesus as the eternal Redeemer and Ruler

of the people of God. Through him, the promise of the permanency and glory of the throne of David has been literally fulfilled in a higher and more transcendent manner than was ever dreamed of by the Jews or any others who centre their attention upon an earthly throne. The man Christ Jesus gathered unto Himself all the moral and eternal significance of the sovereign rights and authority of the throne of David, and has gloriously combined the human and divine in the administration of the kingdom of God upon earth.

The objection urged against this interpretation is, that it is an unwarranted spiritualization of literal prophecy. The question asked by the millennial literalists is, "On what authority do we accept as literal the promise to Mary, 'Thou shalt bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus' in Luke 1:31, and then spiritualize the subjoined statements, 'The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever'?" It is contended that the prediction of the birth of Jesus has been literally fulfilled, and the prediction that He would sit upon the throne of David must also be literally fulfilled.

The distinction here made between the literal and the spiritual is not well founded. The spiritual is just as literally true as the physical and the material. It is perfectly correct to contrast the literal and figurative, or the physical and the spiritual, but not the literal and the spiritual. Figurative language is used in scripture to describe and explain both the physical and spiritual. It is just as literally true that Jesus was "exalted to the right hand of God to be a prince and a Saviour" (Acts 5:31) as it is literally true that He was born of the Virgin Mary. The throne of David

He was ordained to occupy forever, was not the political throne at Jerusalem, which was finally overthrown by the Romans, but the Messianic or Mediatorial throne at the right hand of God "Far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come." (Eph. 1:21.) This is the throne of the theocracy that was typified by the political throne in the Holy City of Jerusalem, just as that city itself was a type of the kingdom of God, and of heaven.

Certainly, this was the conception of Paul, the Apostle. Many quotations might be given from his epistles in support of this interpretation. One characteristic passage, that in its very comprehensive sweep gathers up the apostolic teaching, will be sufficient:

Wherefore, I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened: that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head of all things to the church, which is the body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in All. (Eph. 1:15-23.)

Exalted to "the right hand of God," means to sit

with God on His throne, and to reign with Him on terms of equality. This exaltation to the highest sovereignty of authority and power is an accomplished fact. Paul wrote in the past tense, without hinting the possibility of a more exalted and glorious throne for Him to occupy. In fact, his terms are exhaustive. Examine them closely; "According to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places (Gr: in the heavens) far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in the world to come." There can be nothing higher, or more powerful or glorious either in this age or any age that may come in the future. Here the terms of Paul are absolute and exclusive, *ou monon en to-aioni-touts, alla kai en to mellonti*, "not only in this age, but also in the coming one, or any that may be coming."

When the exalted and glorified Jesus delivered His messages to the exiled apostle John on lonely Patmos to be transmitted to the churches of Asia, He closed the series with the solemn declaration, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." The throne of Jesus is not one yet to be established or restored, but one that He is now occupying. The throne that those who overcome will share with Him, according to the promise, is not one that is yet to be won, or to be taken possession of, but a throne upon which He is now sitting, and from which He in unison with the Father is directing, or administering the divine government. This is made clear from the grammatical construction of our text. The state-

ment is in the past tense and very emphatic. *Os kago enikesa, kai ekathisa*, "As I also overcame and sat down with my Father in his throne." (Revised Version.)

Those who reason that there are two thrones, the Father's throne which Jesus is now permitted to share, and the other the throne of David, which Jesus will assume in His millennial reign, and share with the saints, are very sorely pressed for an argument. Would that millennial throne be more exalted than the throne He now shares with the Father? If so, it would be more exalted than the throne of God which is not admissible. Would it be less exalted than the throne He now occupies? If so, that would mean a second humiliation.

If the millennial throne, or the throne of David means the Messiah established in restored Jerusalem, as this world's political sovereign, however absolute and righteous that sovereignty might be, and however much it might be enshrouded with indescribable rapture and glory, it could mean nothing less than a second humiliation, for which there is no intimation in the scriptures, and no reason in the revealed plan of God for the redemption and salvation of the world.

The simple explanation of the co-reign of Jesus with the Father upon the throne in heaven is that the message was delivered in the language of earth. There is no other medium of conveying heavenly realities to the children of men. Therefore, of necessity, the language is figurative. In ancient times, it was not an uncommon thing for the king and his son to occupy conjointly the throne of the kingdom and reign on terms of equality. Such a double throne is used as a figure of Christ and His Father united in the supreme, divine sover-

eignty both of earth and of heaven. There is, however, this exalted difference between the figure and the reality. In the figure, the father and son are united only in the bonds of office, but in the reality the Father and Son are one in essence and substance. Jesus said, "I and my Father are one." In logic, distinction can be made between them, but in substance there is no distinction. Consequently, the throne of the Father and Son is one throne. It is the throne of God, now occupied by the Son, who was Emanuel, "God with us." (Matt. 1:23.) This identity of Father and Son is thus emphatically expressed by Paul to Titus, "Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:12.) We are here referred back to that remarkable prediction of Isaiah, in which the son to be born of the house of David, to occupy the throne of David and administer the government of the kingdom of God is called, "The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isa. 9:6.) This throne of David is the throne of the theocracy, which Jesus now occupies, and from which He administers dominion and power over the kingdom of God in earth and heaven. Thus the prediction of the angel to Mary has been literally fulfilled, and all peoples, tribes, and tongues are called upon to worship the Lord of glory, who is "the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *to whom* be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." (1 Tim. 1:17.)



## CHAPTER IV

### THE MILLENNIAL REIGN

**A**N important feature of the millennial teaching is that at His second coming, Christ will reign as king in Jerusalem for a thousand years. It is from this that they derive *their* name millennium, which is a compound of two Latin words, *mille* thousand, and *annus* year. The key passage of scripture upon which they base their theory is, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." (Rev. 20: 6.)

The idea of the saints living on this earth for a thousand years, arrests one's attention. It is very difficult to think of men and women continuing an earthly existence, through summer's heat and winter's snows, in an unbroken succession of one thousand calendar years. We are reminded, however, that the saints who thus reign with Christ, are those who have entered upon the resurrection life, and are possessed of spiritual bodies. "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." (1 Cor. 15: 44.) But according to the millennial theory, those people with spiritual bodies will live in a natural world. This earth will still retain its physical features. Of course they say it will be purified, and made conformable to the life of spiritual beings. This would be a marvellous transformation. Just how spiritual beings may be able to fit into the physical conditions of this world, or how this earth may

be transformed into a spiritual paradise for the risen saints is not revealed. We are assured, however, that God is going to do it and "with God all things are possible." This latter statement must be accepted with some reservation, because God cannot do an irrational thing, and maintain the balance of his deity, any more than He can do an immoral act and remain a holy God. It is quite irrational to devise a fanciful scheme, and then present as the outstanding proof of its possibility the misappropriated statement of Jesus, "With God all things are possible." It is a very heavy strain on one's intelligence to accept this scheme on evidence of that character. But the proof of the millennialists is in the prophecy, "There will be new heavens and a new earth." (2 Pet. 3:13.) Even so, according to their interpretation, these will be still physical and subject to the physical laws of this solar system. They protest against the spiritualization of the prophecies, and insist that all these predictions must be taken literally. If that means anything at all, it means that this earth will still remain a physical planet subject to physical laws; that the nations of the earth will still remain organized political sovereignties; that Jerusalem, the capital city, will be a material city; the old material city of David, and the throne of David, will be the material political seat of Israel's sovereignty which David founded in the Holy City on Mount Zion; and that the restoration of the Jews to Palestine will be the regathering of the people of Israel as a physical people returning to the home land from which they were driven by the invasions of the enemy nations. Just how the risen saints with spiritual bodies will fit into these material and physical conditions, does not appear, and there are no attempted explanations for this strange

system. Yet it is impossible to escape this irrational situation if the exclusively literal interpretation of the millennialists is to be maintained. The dilemma is entirely of their own creation.

Rather than dismiss the theory of the thousand years at this point, we will examine the premises upon which the millennialists base their conclusions. They have an ingenious method of computing the prophetic numbers of the Old Testament, especially the number seven and the term week, which so frequently appear in the Levitical law and the predictions of the prophets. Here is a sample of their reasoning:

Upon this sacred rock of *sevens* we can consistently, with the Jews, base our conclusion that we have the scriptural *week, week of weeks, week of months, week of years, week of seventy years, week of times, week of olams or aions (ages)*, so we also have the great week of milleniums, or blessed seventh thousand years of rest. This scriptural doctrine of the millenium cannot be shaken, its root is in the Sabbath of Genesis, and its fruit is the thousand year kingdom of Revelation. (*Jesus Is Coming*, W. E. B., page 39.)

Undoubtedly the sacred number *seven* in its scriptural use is an interesting study, but we can well afford to hesitate before accepting this writer's dogmatic conclusion. If the *week* and weeks or aions or ages and millenniums denote definite periods of time which are clearly defined in the scriptures, there ought to be very little difficulty in reaching an agreement upon fixed dates. Given definite mathematical data as a basis of calculation, and a consistent method of reckoning, such as these writers claim to possess, the results ought to work out with the exact mathematical precision of the rotation of the planets. But even the

millennialists, with all their vaunted skill in prophetic interpretation and certainty of chronological data, are unable to agree on "the times and seasons which the Lord hath placed in His own power." Some, basing their calculations upon the "rock of the sacred sevens," were certain they had discovered the exact date when Christ would come a second time. William Miller, who began to preach the Second Advent in 1831 A. D., predicted the coming of Christ in 1843. He said, "I believe the time can be known by all who desire to understand and be ready for His coming, and I am fully convinced that sometime between March 21st, 1843, A. D., and March 21st, 1844, A. D., according to the Jewish mode of computation of time, Christ will come, and bring all His saints with Him; and then He will reward every man according to his works."

So certain were the disciples of William Miller that the end of the world was at hand the farmers among them did not do their planting, all suspended their work, and at the specified time gathered at selected places to wait for their Lord's return. Great was the disappointment when nothing unusual occurred and they had to return to their earthly cares and toils. But Mr. Miller was not disheartened. He reviewed his calculations and discovered to his satisfaction, and the great relief of his followers that he had made a mistake. The advent was to be a year later. Again preparations were made for the great meeting in the air. But the time of expectation passed and they were still of the earth earthy, and cumbered with much serving. Since 1844, many dates have been set, followed only by as many grievous disappointments.

The latest adventurer, who made bold to take chances on fixing dates, was Pastor Russell of Millen-

nial Dawn fame. He worked out the problem of "the sacred sevens" to his perfect satisfaction and the gratification of his followers. He was absolutely certain that Christ would come to set up His kingdom and inaugurate His millennial reign in 1914. (Pastor Russell's books: *Thy Kingdom Come*, page 23; *The Time Is at Hand*, page 75.) This date is now well in the past and as yet there is no evidence that Satan is bound, and that the returned Lord is ruling the world with His risen saints. The ingenious explanations advanced by the followers of Russell to avoid the dilemma into which the utter failure of their predictions have placed them, cannot dispose of the fact that their date for the dawn of the millennium was 1914, and their prophecies have not been fulfilled in any sense.

The folly of attempting to fix definite dates has been made so vexatious by the many disappointments that the more conservative millennialists strongly deprecate any effort to appoint the times and seasons. They wisely accept the caution of Jesus, "No man knoweth the day nor the hour wherein the son of man cometh." And yet, they persistently maintain that they can consistently and safely base their millennial theory upon "the rock of the sacred sevens" and the thousand year periods. They are sure that the prophetic days, weeks, and years are to be taken symbolically for definite periods of time which work out the millennium with mathematical correctness. They apparently see no inconsistency when insisting that the prophecies themselves must be interpreted literally, and yet the sacred numbers involved in those prophecies must be given a figurative meaning. In working out their calculations, they are unanimous in the conviction that of the week of millenniums, six days have already elapsed

since the beginning of human history, and that the beginning of the seventh is now due. These are reckoned as six days of labor, which are now closing, and "the blessed *seventh* the thousand years of rest, the Sabbath of the millennium, which is now at hand." Is not this an attempt to fix dates?

If they have certain data, as they claim, it is only reasonable to expect that they should be able with some degree of accuracy to fix a definite date when this "Blessed Millennium" will begin. But every attempt to fix a date based upon "this rock" of computation has been very disappointing. These repeated failures raise a question as to the solidity of the rock upon which these calculations are founded. They suggest to minds not confirmed in millennialism, that the supposed "sacred rock" is only a shifting sand-bar of speculative hypotheses. They at least give justification for a demand for more definite proof that the sacred number *seven*, and the term *week* were divinely intended to teach the theory which is forced upon them by millennial theorists.

History is appealed to as corroborative evidence of the correctness of the interpretation. Quite an array of authorities are quoted to show that millennialians have flourished from the beginning of Christianity. This, however, does not prove the correctness of the theory. From the beginning of Christianity, men flourished who denied the divinity of Jesus. There are many to this day who believe that Jesus was not the Messiah but an impostor, basing their conviction upon the teaching of the chief priests and rulers of the Jews who secured His crucifixion as a malefactor. When we bear in mind that the central idea of the Jews regarding the messianic kingdom, was political, that the Jews

formed the nucleus of the Christian church, and that in spite of the vision of Peter on the house top, the Jerusalem council and the teaching of Paul, a strong section of the first Christians clung tenaciously to Judaism, it is not at all strange to find that from the beginning there have been Christians who held to the Rabbinical teaching that the kingdom of God must be a political kingdom under the reign of the Messiah. After the destruction of Jerusalem the Judaizing Christians looked for the restoration of Israel, and the reëstablishment of the throne of David. These people, whose national convictions were so deeply entrenched, would naturally cling to the literal interpretation of the prophets taught by the Rabbins. The apocalyptic references of John to the thousand years' reign with Christ, were accepted by these literalists as applying to the expected Messianic kingdom. At the close of the first thousand years, there was a great revival of millennial teaching, based upon "the thousand year periods." A full period of gospel history was rounded out. Certainly, now was the time of the closing of the gospel dispensation, and the beginning of the millennial age. The millennialists made the very most of the time to impress their arguments upon the church, and the teaching awakened the spirit of expectancy. Many were converted to the millennial theory. Time rolled away and the millennium did not come. Century after century passed, and the Lord failed to make His appearance in the air. Nearly another thousand years has rolled into history, and yet the Lord delayeth His coming. These failures are presumptive evidence that there is a radical error in the theory of the thousand year periods. Still, the millennialists hold to their theories with remarkable pertinacity. Every time

history refutes their predictions, like William Miller and Pastor Russell, they review their data, present novel excuses that restore the confidence of their followers, shift their ground a little to adjust themselves to the new demands of the passing centuries and continue their millennarian prophesying, with all the exclusive dogmatism of the past. During the last twenty-five years we have witnessed a great revival of these predictions based on the thousand year periods, and the failure of these prophecies. Still the millennial teachers are not abashed. They continue their prophesying with unabated zeal, and assure us that the miscalculations of the past have been finally corrected, and "this scriptural doctrine of the millennium cannot be shaken."

Just how they reconcile the mathematical discrepancies in their calculations does not appear, but despite the failure of former predictions they hold tenaciously to the thousand year periods, "seven of which make a complete number." According to their reckoning, the thousands begin with the completion of creation, which means the beginning of human history. Accepting Ussher's chronology of the Bible, six thousand years have passed, which mark six distinct periods, a thousand years each. They are at considerable pains to show that some great epochal event took place at the closing of each period. The next thousand years being the seventh making the complete number must be the millennium. The position is thus authoritatively stated, "Six thousand days of labor have passed; we are now to enter upon the blessed seventh thousand years of rest." (*Jesus is Coming*, W. E. B., p. 39.)

The starting point of Ussher's chronology is the birth of Christ. We are now in the twentieth century,



designated *Anno Domini*, "the year of our Lord." Previous to the birth of Christ, the time is marked, B. C. According to this reckoning human history began four thousand years before Christ. It is worthy of note that of the six thousand years of human history according to this inflexible reasoning, two thousand of them have been since the birth of Christ.

Think of it! Two thousand years since the Roman Cæsar ruled the world, and only four thousand years of human history preceding that time. Is there any proof that this chronology is correct? If the starting point cannot be fixed with mathematical precision, the calculations must remain uncertain. If the premises are unsound, the conclusions are invalid. It is now generally accepted that the chronology of the Patriarchal period is unreliable. There are evident inaccuracies in its calculations, and the date of the beginning must go farther back into antiquity. The most conservative and orthodox biblical critics maintain that the beginning of human history must be many thousand years earlier than Bishop Ussher indicates. The seventh thousand, therefore, would be more likely to have commenced with the birth of Jesus than with the twentieth century, and we may be in the twentieth thousand years of human history. We cannot escape the conviction that the millennialist calculations are chronologically unsound, and the conclusions logically fallacious.

Some may protest, "If we cannot believe the Bible in regard to the time of its events, then what can we believe? We must accept the statements of the Word of God." But the Bible does not say that Adam and Eve were created just four thousand years before the birth of Jesus. Neither does the Bible give us any sure data of the prehistoric period by which we can

work out a reliable chronology. It is not divine inspiration that is in question, but human calculations. Dr. Melvin Grove Kyle, lecturer of Biblical Archæology, Xenia Theological Seminary, Ohio, one of the most conservative writers, says in regard to the passing away of the old, and generally accepted system of Biblical chronology:

The history of the race and the evidence from the *débris* of ruined cities imperatively demand more time than that theory of the chronology of the world allows, and the vast number of dates produced by archæological inscriptions and manuscripts show beyond question that the chronology of that age was not constructed with the mathematical rigidity of the nautical almanac. . . . In the light of research into antiquity, the rigidity of the astronomical theory of chronology must give way to a more flexible system in keeping with the days when there were no clocks or almanacs and the people did not think in the terms of these later inventions. (Kyle's *The Deciding Voice of the Monuments in Biblical Criticism*, pp. 77-78.)

These facts make it clear that we have no ground for assuming that the beginning of the twentieth century was the beginning of the seventh thousand year period. As a matter of fact, if Ussher's chronology is accepted the beginning of the twentieth century would not be the beginning of the seven thousandth year. Twenty full centuries are needed to make two thousand years. Therefore, in any case the beginning of the seven thousandth year will not be until the beginning of the twenty-first century.

There is another line of reckoning by which the day of the Lord is determined. Days and weeks are to be taken symbolically. Here they break with the theory of exact literalism, and take refuge in the figurative.

In this symbolic language of prophecy, a day is to be taken for a year. Just why the prophecies must be so interpreted, is not clear. The Bible does not say so much. It seems to be the conjectural hypothesis of those who feel they must make out a case. This reckoning formed the basis of the Adventism of William Miller. He reasoned that the twenty-three hundred days of Daniel represented an era of so many years. (Dan. 8:13, 14.) This era began with the return of Ezra in the year 457 B. C. Reckoning a day for a year, these days would expire in 1843 A. D. Just 2300 years. Therefore, this was the time, according to the Adventists, that the Son of man would come to cleanse the world and begin His millennial reign. There was evidently a serious mistake somewhere. It may be safe to conclude that the prophet did not intend a day to be taken for a year.

Those millennialists who repudiate the attempt to fix exact days, have "a more sure word of prophecy." They have carefully reviewed the chronology of the Bible and have discovered that a prophetic day, instead of meaning a year, means a thousand years. Therefore, "the day of the Lord" covers an exact thousand calendar years. If this were applied to Daniel's prophecy, mentioned above, it would mean that 2,300,000 years must elapse between the revival of Ezra and the second coming of Christ. That would mean that there are yet 2,297,700 years to elapse before "the Son of man comes in his glory and all the holy angels with him." (Matt. 25:31.) And yet we are told that the millennial reign is now due, and about to begin. There are, however, we are assured, clear scriptural statements that "with God a day is a thousand years." Does not the Psalmist say, "For a thou-

sand years are but as yesterday when it is past and as a watch in the night"? (Psa. 90. 4.) It certainly requires a dexterous word juggler to bend this passage to support the millennial contention. The meaning is so clear that it is a very bold person, or a blind one, who would attempt to fit it into the millennial system. The Psalmist was simply emphasizing the fact that to God, "who is from everlasting to everlasting," time is not reckoned by days and years. To Him "a thousand years are but as a watch in the night." Sleep through those hours of the night darkness, with no timepiece at hand, and then think of estimating the number of minutes you have spent in silent slumber. That is what a thousand years are like to God. Do you grasp it?

There is another passage that is appealed to as giving definite instruction that "the day of the Lord" is a thousand years. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Pet. 3:8.) To the millennarians this settles the question. It is conclusive. But if Peter intended to give an infallible canon for reckoning prophetic time, he went at it in a very vague and roundabout way. It looks as though he were trying to conceal, rather than reveal, a method of determining dates. He does not say that in determining the time of the coming of the Lord, one day is equivalent to a thousand years. Such a thing is not hinted. There were scoffers, walking after their own lusts who were saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." (2 Pet. 3:3, 4.) The time seemed long, and this was used against the apostle's teaching. Peter undertook to enlighten them by the fact that God

does not measure time by days and years as men do. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." He simply means that, "All time is as nothing before God, because in the presence as in the nature of God, all is eternity; therefore nothing is long, nothing is short before Him; no lapse of ages impairs His purpose. And when the longest period is passed, it is but as a moment or indivisible point in comparison with eternity." (A. Clark's *Commentary*.)

Surely they labor in vain, who pervert the meaning of the apostle to secure support for the dogma that "the day of the Lord" and "the day of Judgment" represent a definite period of one thousand calendar years. A cause that is reduced to such straits is certainly lost.

The one passage to which all millennialists pin their faith is the vision of John on Patmos:

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but

they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (Rev. 20: 1-6.)

This apocalyptic vision is given a strictly literal interpretation. On this literalism a very elaborate scheme is worked out giving a detailed program of the eschatological operations of the returned Christ that admits of no variations. The scene of the drama is on the earth, with Jerusalem as the capital city. Satan is bound for a thousand years in the bottomless pit, so that he can neither tempt people to evil, nor oppose the saving operations of the returned Lord. During this thousand years, Jesus will reign at Jerusalem and extend His kingdom over all the nations of the earth. His sovereign power will be so absolute that no one will be able to oppose the divine will or reject the saving power of God. Then the world will be saved, and all peoples, kindreds and tribes will be brought into the kingdom of God by virtue of triumphant divine power. Faith will play little or no part in this salvation because faith will have given place to sight. Man will have no power to disbelieve, and all men will be saved. The risen saints will be the agents and evangelists of Christ to save the world, and "They shall live and reign with Him a thousand years." At the close of this thousand years, Satan is loosed from his chains and prison, and given liberty to go out, yea, he "shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." (Rev. 20: 8.) Then shall there be tribulation on the earth such as was never known before, Satan will be supreme.

This is a very bare outline of the program the mil-

lennialists have arranged for the millennial reign of Christ. The elaborate and intricate details are so attractively painted that their brilliant colouring is liable to hold the attention, and prevent the reader from seeing the picture in the true perspective.

According to this teaching, Christ is now unable to overcome the power of Satan, because His kingdom is not yet established on the earth. When He comes a second time He will be clothed with full regal power. Then He will bind Satan with chains, and throw him into the bottomless pit where he will have no power over men. Having obtained this victory, He will rule supremely in the world without let or hindrance, for a thousand years. Then comes the great surprise! Satan is loosed out of his prison, Christ has either exhausted His power, is conquered by the old serpent whom he had kept bound in the pit for a thousand years, or He voluntarily steps aside and gives the devil freedom to deceive the world, and destroy all the good work that had been done during the "blessed millennium of rest." However this loosing of Satan, in the millennial scheme, may be explained it is not very creditable to an all victorious Lord. If it is merely the working out of "the divine plan of the ages," the wisdom and goodness of the one who worked out the plan is not to be admired.

When the Lord has the devil so bound that he can neither touch nor tempt men, and for a thousand years the world is kept in this glorious state of peace, holiness, and effulgent glory, why would the Lord, the Omnipotent Sovereign, set Satan at liberty to destroy all His good work and make the world a worse place than it ever was before the thousand years of millennial glory began?

When the devil is loosed from his prison, whom will he deceive? The passage says, "The nations which are in the four corners of the earth." But under the millennial scheme, all these nations will be converted and under the glorious reign of Jesus. Will Jesus abdicate His throne in favor of the devil? Will Jesus after He has conquered the nations, overthrown Satan, "all ungodly government and lawlessness, and established a kingdom in righteousness, having the church with Himself as sovereign, Jerusalem as the capital, regathered and converted Israel as the center, and all nations included in a universal world wide kingdom of pure and blessed government," (*Jesus is Coming*, W. E. B., page 37)—will the all conquering Jesus after such a universal and absolute conquest, loose the bands of Satan and step aside for him to destroy all this glorious work, and throw the world into greater chaos and sin and tribulation than was ever known in the worst period of its history? Surely, there is something seriously wrong in the interpretation of the Apocalypse, that runs the "blessed millennium of rest" into such a cataclysm of disaster and tribulation. Is it possible that after the nations are so wondrously saved from the power of Satan that the conquering Christ will abdicate His throne in favor of the devil and turn over the nations to him to be deceived and destroyed? Shall these nations that had been saved, be surrendered by Jesus to be ravished by sin and excess, and made to suffer indescribable tribulation? What reason can be given for such an abdication of power, and withdrawal of divine protection? If Christ by the exercise of omnipotent, irresistible power, in His millennial reign, puts Satan in chains and hurls him "into the bottomless pit, so that he should deceive the nations no more,"



why does He not keep him there forever? The literal interpretation of the promise of the angel to the Virgin Mary makes this necessary. Such a literal interpretation of this apocalyptic vision would make the All-wise God either a fool or a fiend.

Furthermore, according to such a literal interpretation, the saints and martyrs for the witness of Jesus, would have only this period of a thousand years in which to "live and reign with Christ" in undisturbed peace and safety. After waiting somewhere, presumably in their graves, for thousands of years for this blessed millennium to begin, they can only hope for one thousand years of unbroken calm and quiet with their glorified Lord. For when Satan is loosed out of his chains, the saints and martyrs are exposed to the trials and tribulations inflicted by the infuriated devil, who has been granted his release. The promise to them is of only "a thousand years' reign with Christ." Surely, the gospel of Jesus Christ and His perfect salvation has a more rational, consistent, and glorious future to offer the faithful saints and martyrs than this theory of the millennial reign promises us.

We turn to a more careful study of the Book of Revelation, and find that these thousand year passages appear in the midst of the most exalted figures of speech and apocalyptic imagery of all biblical literature. In fact, the whole book of the Revelation of St. John the Divine is a connected series of sacred figures based upon the apocalyptic and prophetic writings of the Jews. The enigmatical language of the book has been a favorite hunting ground for all sorts of religious adventurers, in search of proof for some freak religious notion. Nearly every canon of exegesis is violated in the arbitrary efforts to make the teaching of Revela-

tion support a chosen dogma. The most absurd and contradictory schemes are urged as the plan of God for the government of the world, and the salvation of men. We are perfectly safe, however, in assuming that any interpretation that throws this book out of harmony with the clear, definite, and unmistakable teaching of the law of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ, is wrong.

Having imposed these strictures, one might look for a lucid and consistent interpretation of this passage that will harmonize with the plain teaching of Jesus and the apostles as given in the gospels and epistles of the New Testament. One does well to approach an interpretation of this book with hesitancy. It is, to say the least, very difficult to get a perfectly consistent interpretation, because its imagery belongs to a period long past, and we have no certain key to unlock all its mysteries. Dr. Adam Clark, one of the most scholarly and careful commentators the world has ever known, does not attempt to interpret the Revelation. After giving an outline of the various interpretations by eminent scholars, he thus explains his own position:

My readers will naturally expect that I should either give a decided preference to some one of the opinions stated above, or produce one of my own; I can do neither, nor can I explain the book; I do not understand it; and in things that concern so sublime a subject, I dare not as my predecessors indulge in conjecture. I have read elaborate works on the subject, and each seemed right until another was examined. I am satisfied that no certain mode of interpreting the prophecies of this book has been found out, and I will not add another monument to the littleness or folly of the human mind by endeavoring to strike out a new course. I repeat it, I do not understand the book; and I am certain that no one who has written on the subject knows anything more of it than myself. . . . Shall I have

the reader's pardon if I say that it is my firm opinion that the expositions of this book have done great disservice to religion? Almost every commentator has become a prophet; for as soon as he began to explain he began to prophesy. And what has been the issue? *Disappointment laughed at hope's career*, and superficial thinkers have been led to despise and reject prophecy itself. (A. Clark's *Commentary*, Preface of *Revelation*.)

Dr. Clark presents the opinions of other commentators with such explanations and safeguards as tend to protect the student and avoid the idle prophecies and disastrous conjectures that mar the work of others. When he reaches these thousand year passages he says:

In what this binding of Satan consists who can tell? How many visions have been seen on this subject both in ancient and modern times! This and what is said in verses 3, 4, and 5, no doubt refer to a time in which the influence of Satan will be greatly restrained, and the true church of God enjoy great prosperity which shall endure for a long time. But it is not likely the number, a thousand years, is to be taken literally here, and a year symbolically and figuratively in all the book beside. The doctrine of the *millennium*, or of the saints' reigning on earth, a thousand years, with Christ for their head, has been illustrated, and defended by many Christian writers, both among the ancients and the moderns. Were I to give a collection of the primitive fathers on this subject, my readers would have little reason to applaud my pains. It has long been the idle expectation of many persons, that the *millennium* in their sense, was at hand; and its commencement has been expected in every century since the Christian era. It has been fixed for several different years during the short period of my life. I believed those predictions to be vain and have lived to see them such. Yet there is no doubt the earth is in a state of progressive moral improvement; and that the light of true religion is shining more and more copiously everywhere, and will shine more and more unto the perfect day. But when the reign of Christ will be

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at its meridian of light and heat we know not. In each believer this may speedily take place; but probably no such time will ever appear in which evil will be wholly banished from the earth: till the day of Judgment. (A. Clark's *Commentary*, Rev. 20: 1-8.)

In reference to the martyred saints who "lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years," he says, "I am satisfied that this period should not be taken literally. It may signify that there shall be a long and undisturbed state of Christianity, and so universally shall the gospel spirit prevail that it will appear as if Christ reigned upon the earth; which will in effect be the case, because His spirit shall rule in the hearts of men, and in this time the martyrs are represented as living again; their testimony being revived, and the truth for which they died, and which was confirmed being now everywhere prevalent. As to the term, a thousand years, it is a mystic term among the Jews." (A. Clark's *Commentary*, Rev. 20: 4.)

It will be observed that these comments are presented, not as a certain, but as a tentative explanation of these figurative passages, but they have the merit of recognizing the difficulties in the way of certain knowledge, and of not running counter to the gospel principle and plan of world evangelism, and personal religious experience. Throughout, Dr. Clark holds firmly to the figurative character of the apocalypse, and maintains that the "thousand years" is not to be taken literally, but as a mystical number must be considered as a figure of speech or symbol, and not as indicating a definite period of time.

In harmony with this opinion, we may quote a living scholar of prominence, Dr. Alfred Faulkner, Professor of Historical Theology, Drew Theological Seminary,

Madison, New Jersey. In an article in the *Christian Advocate*, New York, he says:

The book of Revelation is a book of symbols and figures, made intentionally thus in order to hide its meaning from the pagans while heartening and comforting the believers during the persecutions of Nero, or Domitian, or of both, and has distinct relations to its own times. It may also rest in part upon Jewish Apocalypses. We have to be sure both of the surface meaning of its symbolism and of the inner spiritual kernel of the symbolism before we can do anything. To attain that we need an infallibility besides which history shows the papal to be feeble and erring.

These quotations from such eminent and candid scholars emphasize the insuperable difficulties in the way of arriving at any consistent and conclusive interpretation of this apocalyptic and enigmatical book. Therefore, any attempt to force upon these figurative expressions a literal interpretation, and to use them for dogmatic purposes is subversive of the cause of truth.

The suggestion of Prof. Faulkner regarding the character and intention of the book is very plausible. It is difficult to credit the idea that John the Divine was given an outline program of the history of the world to the end of time. He was in the midst of a severe persecution that was ravaging the church, as a result of which he was suffering banishment on the Isle of Patmos. It is very reasonable that he would write a book for the times "to hearten and encourage believers." But to do so he must avoid adding fuel to the fury of the pagan persecutors. This could only be done by writing, as it were, in code. This code he found in the apocalyptic imagery of Jewish literature. Under this imagery he describes the conditions and ex-

periences then prevailing as the binding of Satan, and reigning with Christ.

The thousand years being a mystical number demands a mystical interpretation. Dr. Whedon gives a clue that leads to a reasonable explanation. He says, "The thousand years is a symbol. We have the number of universality — ten — raised to a cube." (Whedon's *Commentary*.) Ten is the Jewish mystical number of universality, three is the number of completeness or perfection. One thousand is ten raised to the third power. When universality is raised to the third power of perfection, do we not have absoluteness? Suppose we substitute and read the passage, "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him absolutely." "And they lived and reigned with Christ absolutely." This has the merit of being consistent with the general teaching of Jesus and the apostles regarding the effect of divine grace in saving man from sin and giving him a complete victory over Satan. The expression, "And after that he shall be loosed a little season," seems to present an obstacle to this interpretation, but, this is more apparent than real. According to the gospel teaching of salvation, the victory over sin and Satan is won through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who remain in unbelief, remain under the dominion of Satan. Those who leave their first love, and "return again to the weak and beggarly elements of the world," are delivered unto Satan again. In order to carry out the symbolism it would be natural to describe this state of backsliding as the loosing of Satan, and the language of Revelation would be most appropriate for the purpose.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Expositor's Bible gives a detailed exposition along this line that is worthy of careful study.

Here it may be well to quote a few of the many passages of scripture that literally express this teaching of the gospel. Jesus and the chosen disciples are in the upper room, at the paschal supper. A deep gloom had settled upon them because Jesus had announced His death and separation from them for a little while. Jesus then gives them the great assurance, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33.) He said also, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me." (John 14:30.) On a previous occasion Jesus said, "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." (John 12:31.) John, the author of the book of Revelation, in his first letter to the Christian believers, wrote: "Ye are of God little children and have overcome them, for greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." (1 John 4:4.) Also, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? . . . We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself and that wicked one toucheth him not." (1 John 5:4, 5, 18.) Can that mean anything less than that Satan is bound so that he cannot touch the soul of him that believeth in Jesus? "For this purpose the Son of God was manifest that He might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8.) It is worthy of note that the apostle uses the past tense. He does not say, "Will be manifest," as if looking for a coming again to bind Satan, but "was manifest." The victory over Satan was accomplished when Jesus made the great sacrifice on Calvary, and overcame death and the grave. This

note of triumphant victory rings strongly and clearly throughout the New Testament, but gets a full expression in this comprehensive passage of Paul:

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:33-39.)

This spirit of triumph dominated the thought and feeling of the apostles. This confidence was not in a victory over Satan that was to come at some indefinite time in the future when Christ would establish an earthly kingdom, but a victory which they were then experiencing. This was the confidence of John when he transmitted from Patmos the messages of the glorified Jesus to the seven churches of Asia. "To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life." (Rev. 2:7.) "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." (Rev. 2:11.) "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." (Rev. 2:17.) "And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations." (Rev. 2:26.) "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment." (Rev. 3:5.) "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in



the temple of my God.” (Rev. 3:12.) “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.” (Rev. 3:21.)

These promises are to the seven churches in Asia. Any one reading them in their connections must be impressed with the fact that the messenger was dealing with present conditions. Those to whom the promises were made were in the midst of the conflict of this present evil world. They were called upon to obtain the victory right where they were. Any attempt to postpone the time of victory to a millennial reign, which, even to its advocates, is still in the unknown and indefinite future, is an unwarrantable violation of the divine messages.

The victory described in all these passages, and many more of the same nature that might be cited, is not political or physical, but moral and spiritual. The victors might suffer violence and death at the hands of the world, and yet triumph most gloriously in soul and spirit. Thus it was that Jesus overcame Satan and the world. Satan could stir the envy of the Jews until they determined to secure His crucifixion. Satan could use an avaricious disciple to betray his Lord with a kiss, and Satan could work through the political ambitions and fears of a perfidious Roman Governor to execute the evil designs of the Chief Priests, but Satan could not touch the essential life of the Lord Jesus, nor sully His soul with one pulsation of evil thought or resentment. Neither could he so seal the tomb as to keep the Lord of glory confined in the grave. The apostle contemplating this triumph and its significance in the redemption of men and women, exclaimed, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy vic-

tory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:55-57.)

As Satan was so bound that he could not touch the soul of the Lord Jesus, or rather could not inflict one injury upon His essential personality, even so is he unable to injure the soul of those who believe in Jesus unto salvation. Tribulation and persecution may be heaped upon them, even the death of the body may be their portion, but if they maintain their faith, they can defy the powers of Satan, and fall asleep in Jesus with that calm and peaceful spirit that characterized the martyrdom of Stephen. (Acts 7:54-60.) This is certainly what Jesus meant, when sending out His disciples on their initial evangelistic mission He said unto them, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." (Matt. 10:28.)

They cannot kill the soul because Satan and all his agencies are bound by the atoning and saving power of Christ. Therefore, the saints are safe, "kept by the power of God unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Pet. 1:5.)

A careful study of all the scriptures, therefore, compels the conclusion that there is not one clear passage which states, or even intimates, that Jesus shall reign on this earth as king over the nations for a thousand years, or any other period of time. The reign of Jesus is not political and temporal, but spiritual and eternal. His kingdom is already established in the world, and He rules through the piety and righteousness of His people. This reign of Jesus is being extended by the conversion of sinners and the development of the saints. This leaven of the kingdom of God will con-

tinue to work until the nations of the earth are brought under His divine sovereignty, and “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.” (Psa. 72:8.)

## CHAPTER V

### THE REIGN OF JESUS

**A**LL Christians believe in the kingly office of Jesus. There is, however, a divergence of opinion as to the time and sphere of the Messianic reign. This divergence has appeared in the discussions of the preceding chapters. There it was shown that the millennialists' conception is of an earthly kingdom with Jerusalem as the capital, and Jesus occupying the restored throne of David. The unscriptural and untenable character of that contention has been made clear. But there is another phase of this question that calls for special consideration.

The millennialists maintain that when Jesus was born at Bethlehem of Judea, He came to assume His regal office and reign over the nations as supreme sovereign. But the world rebelled against Him, forcibly ejected Him, and compelled Him to return unto the Father, leave the prince of this world, Satan, as the owner and ruler of the nations, until the inefficiency of the gospel to save the world is fully demonstrated; then Christ will come a second time "in glory and great power." At this return, Jesus will bind Satan and cast him into the bottomless pit, take control of this world's affairs, and from the throne of His father David, in Jerusalem, reign in person over all nations, and accomplish the world's salvation.

According to this theory, when Jesus was manifest in the flesh, and entered upon His divine ministry, He found Satan in control, and so strongly entrenched in

the world, that He could not overcome him, therefore His mission was a failure. The betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus was a forcible ejection from the world that He could not prevent. Therefore, the devil was the stronger. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." (Luke 11:21, 22.) Jesus made this statement to emphasize His claim that He was able to cast the devil out of the world even as He cast the devil out of the possessed people that were brought to Him. If the millennialists are right the Master was mistaken. He was not able to dispossess Satan and cast him out, but on the contrary Jesus Himself was overcome and cast out, leaving Satan in full possession of the world. In His helplessness, Jesus had to return unto the Father. He is now awaiting a favorable time and opportunity when He can come again and successfully compete with the power of the devil. Then by the full exercise of sovereign power, He will overcome his satanic majesty, bind him in chains and put him in prison, and He will have a free hand to save the world.

It is difficult to understand how such a grotesque presentation of the gospel can be accepted by intelligent readers of the scriptures. If Jesus can at any time in the sweep of the eternities overcome the devil and cast him out, why could He not do it when He said, "All power is given unto me, in heaven, and in earth"? (Matt. 28:18.) Why can He not do it now? If it is, or will be, possible for Jesus, at any time to save the world by "might or by power," why has He not been able to do so in the past? Why is He not able to do so now? If able, why does He not do it? Can it be

the deliberately worked out and inflexible plan of the All-wise and All-merciful God, that the world should be under the autocratic rule and dominion of Satan for thousands of years, while He reserves unto Himself the sovereign might suddenly to eject the enemy of all good, and by a sweep of glorious power to save the world from sin and all its awful consequences? To say that God, through Jesus, is able to save the world by the exercise of force at one period of the world's development and not at another, is to impugn His divine Omnipotence. To say that at all times He can save the world by the might of His sovereign will, and yet He refrains, and does not, is to impugn His righteousness and justice.

Did the world under the dominion of Satan so effectually reject its Rightful King, that He was compelled to leave the enemy in potential and actual control? Much of the fabric of the millennial theory hangs on an affirmative answer to this question.

It is true that Jesus "came unto His own and His own received Him not." (John 1:11.) They delivered up, denied and killed the Prince of Life. But was this action on the part of the Jews a demonstration of Satan's superior power? or merely an evidence of the people's perversity? Were they able to take by wicked hands, crucify, and slay the Prince of Life, because Jesus had not sufficient power to set their designs at naught, and prevent their wicked plans? Or was it because the plan of redemption through sacrificial atonement required that He should die at the hands of wicked men for the sins of the world? Surely, the cross and the grave give the divinest demonstration of the sovereign power of Jesus. There was nothing accidental or casual in the tragedy of the cross. While

on the one hand, it was the extreme expression of human perversity, on the other hand it was a method of exhausting human iniquity, and paying the ultimate penalty of the world's sin. Jesus in "His own self (voluntarily), bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes we are healed." (1 Pet. 1:24; Titus 2:14.) In this self-surrender of Jesus, the devil suffered an overwhelming and decisive defeat. Listen to Peter on the day of Pentecost:

Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it. (Acts 2:22-24.)

Can any one read that passage and not feel that it breathes forth the supreme will and sovereign power of God? It clearly intimates that even in the arrest and crucifixion, the divine power was supreme.

God having determined that the salvation of a lost world should be brought about in this way: neither the Jews nor the Romans had any power here but what was given to them from above. It was necessary to show the Jews that it was not through Christ's *weakness* or *inability* to *defend himself* that He was taken; nor was it through their malice merely that He was slain; for God had determined long before, from "the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8), to give His son a sacrifice for sin; and the treachery of Judas, and the malice of the Jews were only the incidental means by which the great counsel of God was fulfilled: the counsel of God intended the sacrifice, but never ordered

that it should be brought about by such wretched means. This was permitted, that was decreed. (A. Clark's *Commentary*.)

When the Roman governor, Pilate, irritated because Jesus did not answer his questions, threateningly said, "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and I have power to release thee?" Jesus answered, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above." (John 19:10, 11.) In the Parable of the Good Shepherd, we have these pregnant words of Jesus, "I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again." (John 10:15-18.)

Therefore, while the Jews were guilty of the crime because of their evil spirit and intention, they could not have crucified the Lord Jesus and forcibly ejected Him, if He had not voluntarily placed Himself in their hands, and submitted to their indignities and crime. By so surrendering Himself, He proved the depth of their envy and iniquity, while He proved, more especially, His power over His enemies, over death and the grave, and over Satan himself. He glorified God, the Father, by His self-sacrifice for human sin and the redemption of the world. All the power of the Jewish hierarchy and Roman Imperialism combined with the powers and principalities of the devil, were wholly inadequate to arrest the Lord Jesus until His hour had come, and He had finished the work which the Father had given Him to do. (John 17:1-4.) Then He went away to the Father again to receive His place on the Father's



throne, from whence He continues the ministry of redemption in the person of the Holy Spirit.

The Jews were so blinded by their misconceptions and prejudices, that with scoffing and jeering they hailed the crucifixion of Jesus as a great victory for the rulers and priests. They could not see that it was really a disastrous defeat for themselves and a glorious triumph for truth and righteousness. This triumph was made complete by His resurrection from the grave and His ascension to the right hand of God. This victory over sin and Satan He obtained not for Himself, but for all men. Those who by faith link themselves up with the all conquering Christ, have the victory over "the world, the flesh, and the devil." To His depressed disciples He said, "These things have I spoken unto you that ye might have peace. In the world ye will have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world." (John 16:33.)

The ascension of Jesus into heaven does not imply His absence from the world. As the second person in the Divine Trinity, Jesus is essentially God and therefore omnipresent. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1.) Immediately after His resurrection, Jesus showed Himself unto His disciples for forty days by many infallible proofs. These appearances of their Lord were so many assurances that He was with them even when invisible to them. During those crucial days of passion week, when the disciples were so saddened by the repeated announcements that He was going away to the Father, He assured them again and again that He would not leave them alone, but would come to them. As He stated definitely and emphatic-

ally, "I and my Father are one," even so did He emphasize His identity with the Holy Spirit, and assured them that He would be ever present with them. He said, "I will pray the Father and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." (John 14:16.) "I will not leave you orphans, I will come unto you." (John 14:18, Marginal Reading.) And again, "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:20.) The Christian's security is realized through the abiding presence of the Lord, who urged, "Abide in me, and I in you. . . . He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:4, 5.)

Therefore, we are not worshipping an absent Lord, who has been overcome and ejected by the sinful world, but the triumphant King of Glory, who is always present with His people. The promise God made to Moses, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest," (Ex. 33:44) Jesus renews to every believing saint.

There is not much encouragement and inspiration in the teaching that Jesus was so weak that He was overcome and expelled from the world by the power of Satan working through the rulers of the Jews, leaving the devil full owner and ruler of the earth, but there is an unfailing inspiration in the knowledge, based upon the revelation of the gospel and Christian experience, that Jesus by His vicarious suffering and death on Calvary's Cross, won a triumphant and final victory over "the prince of this world," and at the present time is "the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, the only wise God." (1 Tim. 1:17.) "The blessed and only

Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." (1 Tim. 6:15.)

Jesus cannot reign by the application of external authority and power and the enforcement of statute law, as a political king rules over his kingdom, any more than the moral salvation of men can be achieved by the observance of a religious ritual and the enforcement of ecclesiastical decrees. Judaism had the most perfect civil and moral code the world has ever known; and it was buttressed, supported, and overlaid with the most elaborate religious ritual, worship, and service that has been devised; yet Judaism not only failed to conquer the world, but lost its own integrity and vitality. The whole system fell into decay and the nation disintegrated. When the Christian church developed an elaborate system of ecclesiasticism and political power, and sought to govern the nations by external political pressure, she lost her moral energy and spiritual influence and the nations rebelled, and rejected her authority. The Christian world has been reformed and vitalized by a restoration of the more simple system and internal moral energy of the gospel.

The industrial unrest, the prevalence of political graft, and "frenzied finance," the Great War and other great evils of the world are presented as proofs that Jesus is not now reigning, and that the devil is supreme ruler of the earth. But the world is not wholly bad. The agencies and forces of righteousness in the world are worthy of recognition. A one-sided study of world events and movements, gives one very lopsided views. He who would reach just and safe conclusions, must make a comprehensive study of world conditions and developments. The power of righteousness as dis-

played in the purifying of society, establishment of legitimate business and the commerce of the world, together with the growth of all the arts and sciences of Christian civilization, must be taken into account. They cannot be credited to the works of the devil as some millennialists in their enthusiasm contend they should be. They who accredit Satan with such beneficent works transform him into a character to be courted rather than eschewed. But do the existing evils in the world prove that Jesus has for the time being abandoned the world, and given it wholly over to Satan to run as he will? And that the good now manifest will grow less and less until the world is wholly bad? Surely, those who so teach get their inspiration from some other source than the revelation of God through Jesus Christ.

The existing evils in the world no more prove that Jesus is not reigning with His people than the rebellion of the Sinn Feiners in Dublin proves that King George V does not occupy the throne of the British Empire. It no more proves that the righteousness of God is a failure in this dispensation, than the existence of a criminal class proves that jurisprudence is a failure. The limitations and suppression of the criminal class displays the need and efficiency of the administration of the law; in like manner, the limitations of unrighteousness in our Christian civilization prove the efficiency of the righteous reign of the Lord Jesus. The existing evils and even the Great War merely prove that there are parts of our social order and political life that are not yet Christianized. In other words, there are people and groups of people, who instead of submitting to the righteous reign of Jesus, choose the evil and rebel against God and the divine law.

Those who advocate the bodily return of Jesus to Jerusalem and His literal reign upon the throne of David insist that the conquest of the nations for God and righteousness can be accomplished only by such a visible and spectacular demonstration of divine power as is implied in such a visible presence and literal reign of the Lord. They maintain that this will not be government by physical force but by divine power. This, however, is more a distinction of phraseology than of fact. The world under such a millennial reign would be a physical world, peopled by men and women in the body, and subject to all the physical conditions of the earth. The returned Jesus is to be in the body, as He ascended into heaven, to reign as a visible king upon a material throne, the literal throne of David. Such literalism as is described, cannot be thought of in any other than physical terms and relations. The government of the nations would necessarily be by physical agencies administered by force. The strictly literal interpretation of the prophecies demands the literal binding of Satan and the suppression of vice by the external application of divine authority and power. By this power all the kings of the Gentiles, or the nations, would be brought into subjection to the King of glory reigning at Jerusalem. Thus the world would be governed by a political head, enthroned in the capital of the Jews. That certainly would mean a localized king, in a local capital. Just what sort of an organization would be developed for governing the nations near and far, does not appear. Certainly to rule over all the nations, even if all selfishness and greed were eliminated, would demand an elaborate organization, with complete provisions for the promotion and regulation of the production, transportation, and distribution of the

needed supplies. Whether this government would be on the lines of a benign autocracy or of a social democracy, or an entirely new line which has not yet been made known by revelation, or anticipated by human genius, is not made clear to us by our modern prophets. But according to the predictions of millennialism, the whole government of the nations of the world will be by the localized central authority at Jerusalem.

If any person imagines that this picture of the reign of Jesus, according to millennial teaching, is overdrawn or does an injustice to the millennial theory, he has only to study carefully the millennial writings, and then think out the strictly literal interpretation of the scriptures to its logical conclusions. The divine processes must be logically true as well as mathematically correct.

Dr. Len Broughton, one of the enthusiastic premillennial preachers, says, "It has always been God's purpose that His kingdom shall be established on the earth." He quotes Zechariah 14:4, 5, in support of his contention, then adds, "No one can doubt this refers to the earthly kingdom. And it is a fact that a large per cent of the Old Testament references to Jesus Christ are to His coming for His kingdom, rather than to His first advent. The proper recognition of this fact may account for much of the skepticism of the world. Certainly, it accounts for much of the bewilderment of the Jew. He is looking for the King. Thank God, some day he shall see Him in all the spectacular glory of his ancient dreams." (*The Second Coming of Christ*, pages 35-37.) "Again this kingly administration of Jesus shall be personal, not spiritual." (*Ibid.*, page 40.) If this administration is not spiritual, then it must be physical and political. We take up another

book and read: "The millennial kingdom will be a literal reign of Christ on earth, not a spiritual exaltation of the Church." (*Jesus is Coming*, W. E. B., page 46.) That can mean only a political reign.

It is not necessary to multiply quotations. All pre-millennialists agree that there must be a personal and literal reign of Christ on earth, to fulfil the Old Testament predictions. Under such a literal reign is the dominion and power exerted to be by external pressure, forcing the human will into submission? Is there any other way of saving the world by sovereign power in a literal or physical kingdom that will compel all men to submit to the will of God?

That this is a fair application of the millennial teaching may be further deduced from the fact that the millennialists are unanimous in their contention that the world never can be saved by the gospel method of individual regeneration. There must be a new dispensation and a new saving principle, adequately powerful, to compel the people to enter into the kingdom of God. Such a compulsion implies the application of an external force that will override the freedom of choice. The appeal will no longer be to the moral conscience with the alternatives of choice, saying, "Choose ye," and "whosoever will," but by the application of sovereign power or pressure that will compel obedience to the divine law. Therefore, under the earthly reign of Christ, the divine principle of salvation and government that has prevailed through all the dispensations of the past will be reversed; and instead of men yielding to the appeals of divine grace and holiness, and voluntarily, under the quickening of the Holy Spirit, accepting the offers of divine mercy and pardon, they will be released from their prison house of sin, by a sovereign

act of Christ, much as the sovereign power of the state grants an amnesty to all offenders to signalize some great national event. Pardon will then be a wholesale legal process, and the pardoned will be compelled to keep the law of God by the pressure of this same sovereign authority. Under such a reign of power, man would be deprived of his essential personality, the power of self-decision, and reduced to the status of a mere piece of machinery in the great workshop of the Almighty. In such a mechanical method of salvation, there can be no moral merit inasmuch as there is no responsible action on the part of the saved. He is not saved because he chooses to be, but because he had to be. He could not will anything else. This conception of the reign of Christ is entirely foreign to the scriptural teaching.

The gospel proves that the localized bodily presence of Jesus is not so effective in saving and governing men, as His invisible presence in the person of the Holy Spirit. The multitudes that gathered around Jesus and followed Him from place to place were actuated by selfish motives. They sought material benefits and physical help rather than moral good and spiritual assistance. For this Jesus rebuked them, saying, "Verily, verily I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for that meat which perishes, but for that meat that endureth unto eternal life, which the Son of man will give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed." (John 6:26, 27.) When He unfolded to them what it meant to "labor for the meat that perisheth not," and urged upon them the great spiritual verities of the kingdom of God, "Many of His disciples when they heard this said, 'This is a



hard saying; who can hear it.' . . . From that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him." (John 6: 60, 66.) In that heart to heart talk with His disciples in the upper room the night of His arrest in the garden, Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works shall he do; because I go unto my Father." (John 14: 12.)

There is no mistaking this promise. The disciples strengthened by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which is His invisible presence, would be able to do greater works than He was able to do by His literal bodily presence. The materialism and unbelief of the people prevented Him from doing the good He would have done. Dr. Len Broughton intimates that this skepticism grew out of the failure of the people to understand the great discovery made by the millennialists, that it was not the divine plan for Jesus to establish the kingdom of God at His first advent. This great transformation was reserved for the second coming which would be at least thousands of years afterwards. Therefore, the Jews were right in their materialism and Christians are wrong in teaching that it was a spiritual kingdom established in the hearts of regenerated men and women, bringing society and nations into harmony with the law of God. The only charge that can be preferred against the Jews was they misunderstood the time of the coming of the kingdom. They were correct in their conception of its character. If this is true, were not John the Baptist and Jesus guilty of misleading the people? They kept the emphasis on the assurance, "The kingdom of God is at hand." It is right near. Jesus, in the midst of His ministry said, "The kingdom of heaven is in you," or among you.

That certainly could not have meant that it was thousands of years in the future, however much the millennialists may try to read this meaning into the words of the Master. If that is what Jesus meant, the people were not so much at fault when they charged that His schooling was defective. Had He explained this point to the Jews, the whole gospel story might have been changed. What object could He have in keeping such an important truth in the dark and permitting a whole nation to perish and all the world to suffer for lack of knowledge? How can Jesus be justified for permitting the people to go to the bad in such ignorance, while He continued to emphasize the opposite, that is, that the kingdom of God is the spiritual government of men and women by the moral principles of heaven? The great work of the kingdom was not to be accomplished by His bodily presence, but by the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, working in and through His disciples. At the mention of His going away, the disciples became very sorrowful. They were disappointed because they expected Him to establish a literal kingdom at Jerusalem. He did not tell them that their expectations in this respect would be realized, but He must return unto the heavens, "until the times of the restitution of all things," then he would return and establish this kingdom. If such were His program, this certainly was an opportune time to enlighten these sorrowful disciples. But He never hinted such a thing. On the contrary, He laid the whole emphasis upon the spiritual work He would accomplish through the ministry of the Holy Spirit in convincing and saving the world. He must depart that this work might be accomplished. He could do more good for them and the

world on the throne of God in heaven than He could in the body enthroned at Jerusalem. Listen to Him.

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you. And when He is come He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin because they believe not on me; of righteousness because I go to my Father and ye see me no more; and of judgment because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak: and He shall show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. (John 16:7-15.)

This explanation clearly and definitely points to the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost and the whole gospel dispensation as the golden age, and the reign of Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit more powerful and conquering than a reign of Christ on an earthly throne could be. The Acts of the Apostles make it plain that the victories of Jesus working through His disciples after His ascension, were far greater than they were before His ascension working with His disciples. There was no Pentecostal revival until after the glorified Christ was "exalted to the right hand of God" and seated on His Father's throne. Ever since Pentecost, Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, has been reigning in the hearts and lives of His people, and through them influencing the world for good. Jesus reigns in every soul He saves. The social, commercial, and political life of the nation is dominated by

the amount of Christian principle that is infused. Not by external force or physical pressure, but by the prevalence of ideas and principles, originating in, and permeated with, the life of Jesus, do we find the efficient factor which in innumerable lives will rule the world as a part of the kingdom of God.

Christ rules the world by occupying men's minds, and imparting to them the divine ideas of truth and righteousness. This governing occupation is by the Holy Spirit. Is not this what Paul meant when, concluding that incisive passage on the coördination of the spirit of man and the Spirit of God, he says, "But we have the mind of Christ"? (1 Cor. 2:9-16.) Innumerable passages might be quoted to elucidate this governing power of the Lord Jesus through the Spirit. One or two characteristic passages will suffice. The sixth and eighth chapters of Romans are very conclusive. Study this passage in particular. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of righteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, His servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine, which was delivered unto you." (Rom. 6:11-17.) Again, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts."

(Col. 3:15.) Paul repeatedly assigns the victories of Christ "to the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe." (Eph. 1:19.) "According to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power." (Eph. 3:7.) "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." (Eph. 3:20.) "Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness." (Col. 1:11.) "Whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily." (Col. 1:29.) "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." (Eph. 6:10, 11.)

Thus as a "prince and a saviour to give repentance unto Israel and forgiveness of sins," Jesus rules in the hearts and lives of His people who yield obedience unto His righteousness. Through the evangelizing agencies of the church, the kingdom and reign of Jesus is extended over the nations, whom He rules by "peaceful penetration." The whole economy of this sovereign reign of Jesus is concisely given by Himself in the great commission to the church:

All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world. (Matt. 28:18-20.)

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
Doth his successive journeys run;  
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,  
Till suns shall rise and set no more.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL

THE universal expectation of all Christians is the complete subjugation of the world by Christ Jesus. All look forward to the time when "The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." (Rev. 11:15.) But interpreters of the gospel differ widely concerning the method and manner by which this glorious consummation is to be realized. The millennial teachers insist that this world dominion of Christ is not to be expected until Christ at His second coming will reestablish the throne of David, and reign as king in Jerusalem.

The place and purpose assigned the gospel by the millennial system claims consideration. Millennialism maintains that the gospel was not intended for the conversion of the world. God never planned to save society by the preaching of the gospel. The divine purpose in this dispensation is merely to call out a select number, his *ecclesia* or church, and prepare them to "meet their Lord in the air." But instead of the church influencing the world for good and purifying the moral and social life of society, the world must grow worse and worse, in spite of all the evangelizing movements and Christian efforts, until Jesus comes a second time to make an end of sin, and renew the world in righteousness.

Just how Christian people can gather from such teaching any inspiration and zeal for world evangelism and missions for the salvation of men it is difficult to understand. According to the millennial theory, all

efforts to save the world are antagonistic to the divine plan.

Dr. R. A. Torrey, Dean, Bible Institute of Los Angeles, in his commendatory foreword to the booklet, *The Folly of Federation between the Church and the World*, which has been freely distributed among clergymen and Bible teachers, says:

I heartily agree with the doctrine of the booklet. The message is one that is greatly needed. If the Church is to accomplish the work that God has called her to do, she must understand God's PLAN and God's METHOD, and must conform to that.

It is not God's PLAN in this present dispensation to save society, but to save individuals and to call out from the world a people for His name.

Just how the individuals that compose society can be saved, without saving the society, the learned doctor does not attempt to explain. In the booklet so heartily commended, the author, Rev. R. E. Neighbour, a Baptist minister of Georgia, says, "The mission of the church is not to make this a better world in which to house sinners but to call sinners to a better world; not to improve social conditions here, but to call the people out of present corrupt social conditions." (*The Folly of Federation*, page 32.) The social conditions are created by people. If there are no people, there can be no social conditions, corrupt or otherwise. "Call the people out of present corrupt social conditions," and those conditions would be changed. These social facts are overlooked by the author. The one thing he is trying to prove is, that "the mission of the church is not to make this a better world." In another place he says, "If men who are active in moral reform and social propaganda could only have the curtains drawn

back, they would see that they are not, as they often suppose, supported by Jesus's name. If the veil were removed, and their eyes opened, they would behold Satan, with principalities and powers, with world rulers of this darkness, with hosts of wicked spirits in the air, energizing men to produce better things." (*Ibid.*, page 39.)

This is a marvellous statement! How interesting to be informed that Satan has become such a benefactor, and saviour of the world, that his hosts are devoting their efforts to "energizing men to produce better things." This is certainly a new rôle for Satan! If this is true, Satan is doing the world far greater service than Christ. He has the moral and social reforms to his credit. Then those who have been denouncing him as the enemy of all good have been grossly maligning him. We are further informed by this author that,

The popular reform waves of the hour are, therefore, satanic. Note one: The very nation-wide sweep of the prohibition wave marks it as approved of Satan. Its momentum is tremendous. Great political parties have heard the roar of its mighty sweep, on and on, even to the very doors of Congress. The scope of its sweep is its ear-mark. God's church was ever to remain a suffering minority.

And yet thousands and tens of thousands of God's children are enlisted. They are enthusiastic,—they are pouring out their wealth, and lending their strength in the mighty conflict, for state, national, and world-wide prohibition.

They have entered the battle in the *name of Christ* and His church. They see a better day. They believe that by the ballot they will soon drive vice and the saloon from the land.

What if the curtain were lifted and they should see behind the scenes their leader — Satan? (*Ibid.*, page 41.)



A commendatory foreword, from Charles Butler, Evangelist, says, "The author follows the premillennial teaching to its logical conclusion." Its teaching is certainly quite astounding. "The thousands, and tens of thousands of God's children" who have enlisted in the great temperance and moral reform movements thought they were laboring to carry out the divine plan, and that Satan was the arch opponent of this good work. These premillennial writers rise to say it is all a mistake, Satan is not opposing, but leading the reforms. The forces of evil in the world, the liquor men, gamblers, white slavers, and the great army of the workers of iniquity that stand in active opposition to all good, are not the followers of Satan. He is the supreme reformer, the father of the mighty sweeping reforms that are roaring in the ears of political parties, and knocking at the doors of the governing powers of the world. We might ask, who, then, is leading the armies of iniquity? It cannot be Satan. He cannot lead both parties. Jesus said, "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself: how shall then his kingdom stand?" (Matt. 12:26.)

This, then, is "premillennial teaching carried to its logical conclusion." "The mission of the church is not to make this a better world." . . . "Not to improve social conditions here." It matters not how good a movement may be, if it improves the world, and helps society to better conditions, it is of Satan. The church cannot become a strong power for good in the world. That would be contrary to the plan of God. If it gets beyond "the suffering minority," it bears "the earmarks of Satan." Therefore, Satan is the leader of "the many popular reform waves of the hour," and the consequent improvement in society.

In this teaching, we get the reason for the vehement millennialist protests against any and every suggestion that the world is, in any respect, growing better. To admit that the world is growing more Christian would be fatal to their system. They must maintain that the gospel was never intended for the conversion of the world. Rev. Len G. Broughton, D.D., the famous preacher, in his book, *Jesus is Coming*, discussing the place of the gospel in the divine plan of world salvation, says, "It must also be understood that the gospel of this dispensation is not for the conversion of the world. If this were true we would have to stamp failure upon the face of the Old Book. It has not, nor never will save the world till Jesus comes." (*Jesus is Coming*, page 49.)

Thus the millennialists discredit the gospel and brand it as inadequate to meet the moral and spiritual needs of society and the world. When so decrying the gospel are they giving glory to God, and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? If the gospel is not intended for the conversion of the world, what message of hope has the church for the lost? Jesus said, "The son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10.) "For I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." (Matt. 9:13.) Certainly any theory of the divine plan of redemption that detracts from the power of the gospel to save men and women, militates against the work and influence of the church, in carrying out the divine commission, "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations." (Matt. 28:19,)

In the New Testament Jesus is heralded as the world's Saviour, with a constant insistence upon world conquest as the objective of the kingdom of God. The

ordinary readers of the Bible readily conclude that the gospel of Jesus was intended for the conversion of the world; and the purification of social, commercial, political, and national life. But the millennial interpreters say that these are the unlearned and unstable who wrest the scriptures to their own destruction (2 Pet. 3:16), not having learned to "rightly divide the word of truth." (2 Tim. 2:15.) In their division of the word of truth, they draw a definite line of cleavage between the prophecies of conquest and glory, and those of suffering and defeat. All the passages and expressions that intimate suffering and defeat are assigned to the gospel dispensation, while all the predictions of conquest and glory are assigned to the millennial reign. Rev. C. I. Scofield, founder of the Scofield Bible Correspondence School, who claims to be a conservative millennialist, in his Bible study course defines this line of cleavage after this fashion:

Whoever carefully considers Old Testament Prophecies must be struck by two contrasting and seemingly contradictory lines of predictions concerning the coming Messiah. One body of prediction speaks of Him coming in weakness and humiliation, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness nor beauty that He should be desired. His visage is to be marred, His hands and feet pierced. He is to be forsaken of man and of God and to make His grave with the wicked.

The other line of prophecy foretells a splendid and resistless sovereign, purging the earth with awful judgments, regathering dispersed Israel, restoring the throne of David in more than Solomon's splendor, and introducing a reign of profound peace and perfect righteousness.

In due time the fulfilment of Messianic prophecy began with the birth of the Virgin's son according to Micah, and proceeded with perfect literalness unto the full accomplish-

ment of every prediction of Messiah's humiliation. But the Jews would not receive their King, "meek and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass," but crucified Him.

What now becomes of the prophetic utterances which positively foretold the earthly power of David's Son? It must be remembered that in volume these exceed the predictions of the Messiah's SUFFERINGS, eight to one. Indeed the earthly glory of Messiah is the great theme of Old Testament prophecy.

The answer is found in the testimony of Christ, and of every one of the writers of the New Testament to a Second Advent of Messiah, when the predictions concerning His earthly GLORY will receive the same precise literal fulfillment as did those which concerned His earthly sufferings.

The great theme of all the Old Testament as we know from Christ Himself is the sufferings of Christ and the glories which should follow. (1 Pet. 1:11; Luke 24:25, 26.) The sufferings are accomplished; the glories which include the restoration of Israel, and the thousand years' reign of Christ, will as surely follow.

The student, then, will find that all prophetic scriptures divide along this line of cleavage, and belong either to the first or second advent of Messiah. (Scofield's *Correspondence Course of Study*, Vol. I, Lesson VI, page 25.)

The ostensible line of cleavage worked out in this lesson is interesting. But is the cleavage real? Or has it been forced upon the prophecies, for the purpose of gaining support for the millennial theory? Before entering upon the particular examination of the prophets, it may be well to review some of the statements of this lesson. Emphasis is placed upon the discovery that the scriptures predicting the glories of the Messiah "exceed the predictions of His suffering eight to one." It seems very strange that of these Messianic predictions, which began to be fulfilled two thousand years ago, those relating to the sufferings of Christ are the only ones that have been fulfilled, and they were

fulfilled in the brief period of thirty-three years,— during the physical life of Jesus — and that all the predictions of the glories which should follow — eight-ninths of the whole,— are yet unfulfilled? And they cannot be fulfilled until at some time in the future,— a time unknown and indefinite — Jesus comes a second time to set up a new dispensation? That is for a period of thirty-three years there was a wonderful fulfilment of one-ninth of the predictions of the Old Testament, but during thousands of years that follow, there is no fulfilment of prophecy? Has the Almighty gone on a journey, or is He merely sleeping, and needs to be awakened? This seems the more striking and strange when we remember that the predictions of “the sufferings of Christ, and the glories which follow,” are so interwoven that the ordinary reader does not discern any such line of cleavage as is drawn by the sage Dr. C. I. Scofield. All recognize the fact that the humiliation and sufferings of Christ began in Bethlehem’s manger, and ended with Calvary’s cross. But was there no glory connected with the life and death of Jesus? Was there no glory in His victory over the grave, His exaltation to the right hand of God, and the consequent descent of the Holy Ghost in Pentecostal power? Was not the resurrection glory of Jesus and the conversion of the multitudes at Pentecost and after, some of the glories that should follow the sufferings of Christ? The night of the betrayal and arrest, Jesus in the upper room, with His disciples began His dedicatory prayer with this significant petition, “Father, the hour is come; glorify thy son, that thy son also may glorify thee.” As He proceeded in His prayer, He said, “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee

before the world was.” (John 17:1, 5.) If this glory was not to begin until the second coming of Jesus, which was more than two thousand years in the future, and might be many thousand, how could Jesus say, “The hour is come”? This does not refer to some time in the indefinite future, but to a time already completed — *eleluthen e hora*. “The hour has come.” This refers exclusively to the glories of Christ which were to follow His sufferings. Jesus, certainly, expected His glories to begin right then. The whole prayer deals with a glory being then revealed, and to be still further revealed through the disciples then closeted with Him, and also those who in the future would believe on Him. He said, “And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them.” (John 17:22.) That could not possibly refer to the glory of another dispensation which was thousands of years in the future.

The first impression of a thoughtful student of Dr. Scofield’s course of study is that his division of the Messianic prophecies is unnatural, arbitrary, forced, and unwarranted. Attention is immediately directed to a detailed examination of the particular prophecies quoted to buttress the millennial structure. There are first the passages that predict the universal diffusion of the knowledge of the true God. For instance:

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14.)

And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children. (Isa. 54:13.)

This shall be the covenant I will make with the house of Israel; after those days saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his

brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more. (Jer. 31: 32, 34.)

And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart and my whole soul. For thus saith the Lord: Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good I have promised. (Jer. 32: 40-42.)

These are a few of the many passages that might be cited as predicting the golden age of the people of God. The millennialists not only insist that these prophecies have not been fulfilled, but that they cannot be fulfilled, until Christ comes a second time to set up a millennial kingdom. That they have not been completely fulfilled, may be readily admitted; but when it is urged that they cannot be fulfilled until there is an entire change of dispensation, and a bodily reign of Christ on earth, we have an entirely different proposition. It seems exceedingly presumptuous for any person or people to say that God cannot use the agencies and forces now at His hand under the present gospel dispensation to fulfil completely all these predictions.

These, like all the prophecies of the Old Testament, were spoken to the people of Israel, and contained a specific message for the times; rebuking popular sins, urging repentance and reformation, and promising deliverance from their enemies and restoration to the divine favor. They also predicted the coming of the Messiah, and the gathering of the nations into the Messianic kingdom of grace and glory.

The New Testament writers accepted these prophe-

cies as applying particularly to the gospel period, and so appropriated them and claimed their fulfilment in the pentecostal revival, and the great missionary triumphs that followed. Jesus claimed to be, Himself, the fulfilment of the prophecies. He said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." (Matt. 5:17.) When the book was delivered to Him in the synagogue at Nazareth, where He was brought up, Jesus read from the prophecy of Isaiah:

The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18, 21. Comp. Isa. 61:1, 2.)

He closed the book and sat down, and when all eyes were fastened on Him, He said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." (Luke 4:21.)

This certainly outlined some of the glories following the sufferings of Christ. The glory of Christ is the deliverance of men and women from the grip of suffering and the bondage of sin.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews in a most masterful and convincing manner shows how Moses and the prophets were being fulfilled by Christ and the preaching of the gospel. He quoted with particular emphasis the prophecy of Jeremiah (Ch. 31:33, 34; Heb. 8:10-12) to prove that the spread of the gospel and the expansion of the Christian church fulfilled the prophecies from which the Hebrews had hoped so much. In developing his argument, he both compares and contrasts the Old Covenant and the New and showed that there had been no change in the principles



of the Old. The only change is in the ritual observance, and method of expression. Under the Old Covenant God, on His part, promised "I will be your God," and the people on their part promised, "We will be thy people." This same mutual agreement takes place under the New Covenant.

If the prophecies of Jeremiah were fulfilled by the gospel in the days of the apostles, how much more completely are they being fulfilled in these days of world-wide missions! The promise is, "And they shall not teach every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me from the least to the greatest." Technically this may not yet be true, but in a general way the promise has been fulfilled in the public preaching of the gospel.

Under the Old Covenant, properly speaking, there was no public instruction; before the erection of the synagogues all worship was confined at first to the tabernacle, afterwards to the temple. When synagogues were established they were used principally for the bare reading of the law and the prophets: and scarcely any such thing as a *public ministry* for the continued instruction of the *common people* was found in the land until John the Baptist, our Lord, and His apostles. It is true that there were *prophets* who were a sort of general teachers, but neither was *their* ministry extended through all the people; and there were *schools of the Prophets*, and *schools of the Rabbis*, but these were for the instruction of *select persons*. Hence it was necessary that every man should do what he could, under that dispensation, to instruct his neighbour and brother. But the prophecy here indicates that there should be under the gospel dispensation a profusion of Divine light; and this we find to be the case by the plentiful diffusion of the sacred writings and by an abundant gospel ministry: and these blessings are not confined to temples or palaces, but are found in every corner of the land; so that, literally, all the people from the least to the greatest

know and acknowledge the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. Almost every man, at least in this land, has a Bible and can read it; and there is not a family that has not the opportunity of hearing the Gospel preached, explained, and enforced. (Dr. A. Clark's *Commentary*, Heb. 8:10-12.)

This explanation was written a hundred years ago. The advance in the distribution of Bibles, and the extension of the gospel during the last century has been marvellous, and is growing with ever widening circles. Thus all the demands of this Messianic prophecy are being met under the gospel.

The prophecies of Isaiah as recorded in the eleventh chapter seem to bristle with difficulties for the millennialists. To them the Utopian conditions described must be beyond the sphere of any dispensation the world has yet seen, and can only be fulfilled under the millennial dispensation that they anticipate will come when "the Son of man shall come in his glory." Their fundamental difficulty here, as elsewhere, is due to their rigid insistence upon a purely literal interpretation and fulfilment. This, however, is absurd inasmuch as all prophetic language is highly figurative and pictorial. Their insistence upon placing the literal and spiritual as opposite and incompatible terms is quite fallacious. To them the literal must be physical. All outside of the physical must be ruled out of the realm of literal truth. This is a serious violation of language and of facts. The spiritual verities are just as literally true as the physical. God is a spirit, heaven is a spiritual home, and all that pertains to God and heaven, in the unseen are spiritualities which are literally true. The true contrasts are not literal and spiritual, but literal and figurative, physical and spir-

itual. Though this distinction has been made in an earlier chapter, it is worthy of emphasis here, as preparatory to a detailed study of this entrancing chapter of Isaiah.

The statement, or prophecy, which links this chapter with the foregoing expositions of Jeremiah's predictions, is "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:9.) In passing, it is worthy of notice that "the earth" to the Hebrew mind meant the land of Palestine, "the land of promise." But the gospel blessings have been diffused through all the world. In the days of John the Baptist and of Jesus, the whole land was filled with the fame and knowledge of the Lord. Never before, in all the history of Israel, had there been such a popular appeal and call to repentance toward God. That this was the period and reformation that the prophet held in view is made clear by the following verse:

"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious." (Isa. 11:10.) Jesus was the root of Jesse. He stood for an ensign to the people, and the Gentiles sought Him. The Greeks desired to see Him, saying, "Sirs, we would see Jesus." (John 12:20, 21.) During the apostolic era, the knowledge of the Lord spread through Asia, Greece, Rome, Egypt, Spain, and some claim, as far as Britain and China.

The following verse is presented as indubitable proof that all this prophecy belongs to the millennial reign to be inaugurated at the second coming of Christ, rather than the first advent, because the Prophet says, it shall be a second time. The whole passage reads, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord

shall set his hand again the SECOND TIME to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the isles of the sea." (Isa. 11:11.)

Is the prophet here describing a dispensation subsequent to and distinct from the reign of the Messiah, the root of Jesse, under the gospel of grace? We think not. There loomed in the future the captivity of Israel and Judah under the Assyrians and Babylonians. Isaiah held in the foreground of his vision, the restoration from that captivity which was accomplished under Ezra and Nehemiah. The more distant prospect was the religious restoration of the people under the Messiah and the preaching of the gospel. The first was largely a political restoration to the land of promise, the second a restoration to righteousness, under the call to repent and enter the kingdom of God. Of course this distinction is not arbitrary because the political restoration involved a religious revival and a restoration of the temple, and sanctuary worship, while in the second great religious awakening, principles of equality and brotherly love were laid down which have revolutionized the political organizations of nations. The distinction is that in the first the political held the place of prominence, while in the second the religious occupies the centre of the field.

The objection urged against this interpretation is that in neither instance were all the people of Israel restored. But the prophet does not predict the restoration of all Israel, but only a remnant. "He shall set His hand again a second time to recover the remnant of his people." The remnant was recovered in the restoration from Babylon, and also in the restora-

tion of grace under the Messiah. Paul emphasizes this provision of the prophecy when he says, "Even so then at this time there is a remnant according to the election of grace." (Rom. 11:5.) Under the gospel preaching, the remnant of the dispersed were recovered from all the surrounding countries. On the day of Pentecost, the first gospel sermon was preached to "Parthians and Medes, and Elamites and the dwellers of Mesopotamia and in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Lybia, about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and Proselytes, Cretes and Arabians." (Acts 2:9-11.) These all heard the wonderful works of God in their own tongue. What more literal fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah could be required? The summary of the places in Acts completely covers the summary of the prophet.

There is also predicted peace and brotherly fellowship, between Ephraim and Judah. "The envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." (Isa. 11:13.)

This also is projected into the millennial period. It is claimed that the only way God can fulfil this prediction is to gather the dispersed of Israel and Judah from the four corners of the earth and reestablish them in peace in Palestine as they were under the reign of David. But to achieve such a political fulfilment, the Jews will have to be not only re-assembled in Palestine, but re-organized into tribes. An intimation that this is impossible will elicit the retort, "With God all things are possible." While we may with safety admit that "with God all things are possible," we can claim with equal safety, that with God some things are very un-

likely, and this is one of those things. It does not appeal to a rational mind as at all feasible. The dispersion of the tribes of Israel has been so complete, and the tribal distinctions have been obliterated for so many centuries, that it is asking a great deal of thoughtful people to believe that God will re-assemble the Jews from all quarters of the earth, and re-organize them on Mount Zion into the twelve original tribes, in order to fulfil these predictions of Isaiah. The wheels of time never turn backward. When once a people or a nation passes through a crisis of history, the former status can never be restored. There must be a moving forward.

Is there not a more rational interpretation to this prediction, that conserves all the elements of truth and maintains the credibility of the prophet? Ephraim and Judah are representative of all of God's people. The point of the prophecy is that a time will come when the people of God, instead of envying and vexing one another, will live together in harmony and true brotherly fellowship. Look at the first gospel scene: The disciples of Jesus, Jews from Galilee and Judea — Ephraim and Judah — “were with one accord in one place.” (Acts 2:1.) For ten days these had “all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication” (Acts 1:14), until the Holy Ghost had come upon them, in fulfilment of the promise of the Father. Under the heavenly baptism, three thousand were converted and baptized. “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and prayers. . . . And all that believed were together and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with

one accord in the temple, and breaking of bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people." (Acts 2:42-47.) After the Pentecostal Church had been increased by several thousands, "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." (Acts 4:32.) Is not this a complete literal fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy? This is the relationship that all the true people of God bear to one another under the gospel of grace. Jesus placed special emphasis upon the importance of this brotherly spirit as an irrefutable proof of the divinity of the Christian religion. He said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:34, 35.) This unity of love and fraternal fellowship was the point of that profound dedicatory prayer of Jesus in the upper room. He prayed "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." (John 17:21-23.)

This is the burden of gospel teaching on the social relations of man with man. If any Christian people are not united in this fraternal affection, and are not "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the

bonds of peace," it is not the fault of the gospel, or because of any failure in the divine system of salvation. The urgency of the gospel is that "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim."

The first part of this remarkable chapter demands attention. The revolutionary effect of the preaching of righteousness, under the Spirit of the Lord, is most marvellous in the extreme. The effect upon the natures of the beast and the reptile is so wonderful, and apparently unnatural, that the millennialists are sure such a transformation cannot be effected under the gospel dispensations, and therefore must rank among the wonders of the coming millennial age. But are we compelled to accept the language of Isaiah as purely literal, and demanding a so-called absolutely literal fulfilment? Is it not probable that the prophet is following the common prophetic practice, and using the names of beasts and reptiles figuratively, as descriptive of the untamed and uncontrolled passions of men in an unregenerate condition? And thereby a pictorial description of the moral and spiritual regeneration of depraved people through faith in the "rod of the stem of Jesse" (Isa. 11:1), the Branch that grew out of his roots?

The passage reads, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like an ox." (Isa. 11:6, 7.)

Could the prophet really mean that a time would come when the religious influence in the world would be so powerful, that the ravenous beasts of the wilds would



undergo such a radical change of nature, that the lion, the bear, the leopard, and the wolf would become harmless, and dwell in peace with the lamb and the kid, under the leadership of a little child?

Human language abounds with striking metaphors whereby men are likened unto animals. In the Greek and Latin classics there are many examples quite similar to this from Isaiah. These are simply poetic figures representing the great change that will come over men in the golden age. Dr. Adam Clark, in calling attention to these examples, says, "How much they fall short of that beauty and elegance, and variety of imagery, with which Isaiah has set forth the very same ideas." (Clark's *Commentary*, Isaiah 11:6-7.)

How forcefully Byron describes Sennacherib's army in its attack on Hezekiah!

The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,  
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold.

The change from simile to metaphor is easy and impressive, "The Assyrian wolf came down on the fold."

The Arabian and Persian poets elegantly apply the same ideas to show the effects of justice impartially administered, and firmly supported by a great and good king:—

Mahmoud the powerful king, the ruler of the world,  
To whose tank the wolf and the lamb come together to  
drink.

Jesus and the apostles make frequent use of these figures. Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravening wolves." (Matt. 7:15.) When commission-

ing His disciples and sending them forth on their first missionary tour, He said, "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves." (Matt. 10:16.)

Paul in his famous farewell to the elders of the Ephesian church said, "For I know that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." (Acts 20:29.) Both Peter and Jude called the ungodly, "natural brute beasts." (2 Pet. 2:12 and Jude 10.) These examples might be multiplied indefinitely. In view of these facts, who can doubt that the fascinating picturesqueness of Isaiah's imagery is intended to describe the radical change that was to take place in the nature and disposition of men under the saving power and righteous reign of Jesus, and the triumphs of the ever blessed gospel.

It is strange that the millennialists cannot see in the progress of the gospel any fulfilment to these Messianic predictions. Is it not exceedingly pathetic for a people to be so blinded by some special theory that they cannot see the beauty and glory of the larger world about them, and feel that they must deny the good that abounds on every side? This composed the pathos of the religious mentality of the Jews and led them to crucify their Messiah. The same peculiar mentality displays itself in those teachings of millennialism that deny to the gospel of Jesus the glories of the world's redemption, and the regeneration of society.

Have not the wolf and the lamb dwelt together? Have not the leopard and the kid lain down together? Has not the lion been so domesticated that he has entirely changed his system of diet and manner of living? Is it necessary to relate to intelligent Christians the

marvellous transformations of character and life, the radical changes of nature, affected by the grace and spirit of the gospel of Jesus? Contrast the ferocious, persecuting spirit of Saul of Tarsus with the gentle, tender, and kindly spirit of Paul the Apostle. We might fill pages relating individual instances of these great moral transformations. We have only to revert to our own pagan ancestry in the British Isles and northern Europe, and contrast their wild, pagan condition with the humane, gentle, and philanthropic spirit that dominates our English Christian civilization as a whole, to get a demonstration of the power of the gospel to transform wild natures. When we contrast that coarse pagan barbarism with the refined spirit of Christian brotherhood, now displayed by our highest types of Christian men and women, we are convinced that no other language could more succinctly and fittingly describe it than the chaste, elegant, varied, and expressive imagery of Isaiah. But we turn to the modern triumphs of the missionary and evangelizing glories of the gospel. When Hunt and Calvert landed on the Fiji Islands, the first sight that greeted them was a cannibal feast. The wolves of those cannibal isles were deliberately preparing to eat their own flesh, and were making it a festive scene of rejoicing. Within fifty years, not only was cannibalism abolished, but practically the whole population were regular attendants at Christian worship, nearly every home had family prayers, and the people were living together in brotherly love and concord. The same story can be told of the New Hebrides, and many other places where the gospel of Jesus has triumphed gloriously. Here is a very impressive example of a changed nature. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was being administered in a native

church on a South Sea island. One of the communicants, a tribal chief, was noticed to be deeply moved by intense passion and excitement; and he suddenly arose from his knees and walked quickly out of the church. In a little while he returned perfectly calm, and devoutly took his place, and received the communion. After the service the missionary asked him the cause of his sudden and extreme agitation. He replied, "You saw the man who came forward and knelt beside me. He also is a chief, and his tribe has been an enemy of mine. I saw him despoil my people and eat my father and mother; and I vowed that some day I would take vengeance on him. This is the first time since then that I have seen him. When he knelt beside me all my old savage blood stirred within me and cried for that vengeance. I did not dare remain beside him any longer for fear I would lose control of myself. I went out and prayed to my Saviour for forgiveness, and sought grace to forgive him, even as my Lord had taught me, and the Lord gave me the victory."

Is not that a literal fulfilment of the prophecy? The wild beast is tamed, and all the ferocious nature is brought into subjection to the spirit of righteousness, described in the first verses of the chapter.

There is another chapter of Isaiah of entrancing beauty, promise and strength of expression that the millennialists assign to the millennial age. It begins, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them: and the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the rose. It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God." (Isa. 3:5.)

Has the world to wait until a new dispensation is ushered in to see the fulfilment of this prediction? If a literal physical fulfilment be insisted on, can we not see it in the development of the world's industries under the magic touch of Christian civilization? Look afield today! See throughout all Christian lands, harvest fields laden with the abundant crops produced by the skill born of Christian education. Think of the waste deserts that have been and are being reclaimed by irrigation. What shall we say of our vast prairie lands, of the great central plains of the American continent that have been converted from a wilderness into extensive fields of ripening grain to feed the increasing millions of the world's population? Surely as we contemplate these wonderful transformations, we can see a marvellous fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, "The wilderness and solitary places shall be glad for them."

But is there not a deeper, grander, and more glorious meaning to the fascinating predictions of this matchless prophecy? Dr. Adam Clark says, "The various miracles our Lord wrought are the best comment on this chapter, which predicts those wondrous works, and the glorious state of the Christian church."

Jesus likened the world to a field of ripening grain. The imagery of Isaiah and the other prophets of Israel was always before Him. We look upon Him as He sows the seed of self-sacrifice for the good of others, and follow Him, in the alleviation of human suffering and sorrow, the bearing of the world's sin, and the dispensing of joy and gladness to all around Him, and we learn the true nature of gospel work. We study the growing harvest under the fostering care and cultivation of the Holy Spirit, and are led to exclaim, "What hath God wrought?" While it is true that much evil

abounds in Christian lands, yet when we compare the blessings of our Christian civilization with the conditions that still prevail in non-Christian lands, we can say with gratitude, "The wilderness and solitary places have been made glad, and the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose."

But it was not the increased fertility of the soil, and the multiplication of physical and material benefits of the people that occupied the centre of the field in the prophet's vision. He was concerned with the revival of righteousness, and the whole-hearted return of the people to God and the highway of holiness. This he looked for under the gospel of the Messiah. Having a vision of this time he said, "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, no ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isa. 35: 8-10.)

In this chapter, the prophet is setting forth the blessings to be enjoyed under the Messiah, and addresses the teachers of the gospel, to show them that it was their business to encourage and direct the people in their expectation of redemption. The miracles which Christ should work are explicitly mentioned. These could not be more clearly and graphically described if the passages were taken from the Gospels. "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap

as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.” (Isa. 35: 5, 6.)

The Gospel points out the way of holiness so clearly that the unlearned shall not err therein, and evil men,—the lions and ravenous beasts,—shall be excluded from the kingdom of Christ. The ransomed shall rejoice with songs of joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. It is almost criminal for men to attempt to rob this scripture of its glorious gospel setting in a vain endeavor to prop up a fanciful theory.

Daniel’s interpretation of the perplexing dream of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, is another prophecy seized upon by the millennialists to prove that the millennial kingdom is a necessity to fulfil the terms of Old Testament prophecy.

Daniel said, “Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and of clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.” (Dan. 2: 34, 35.)

Premillennialists place the world-triumph of this mysterious stone after the second coming of Christ; because Daniel said this vision of the great image and its disastrous fate was to show the king, “What shall be in the latter days.” (Dan. 2: 28.) They quite arbitrarily define the phrase, “the latter days,” as meaning the times of their millennial period. The literal rendering is “in the after days,” or “hereafter.” That is the rendering given in the interpretation of the

dream. And it is certainly the meaning of Jacob in blessing his sons. (Gen. 49:1.) When Joel prophesied of the gracious benefits of the outpouring of the spirit of God upon all flesh, he said, "And it shall come to pass afterwards." (Joel 2:16, 17.) Peter applied that prophecy to the experiences of Pentecost, saying, "But this is that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in *the last days*, saith God."

In this case, the phrase meant what would happen to the dominions of the king, and the immediately succeeding empires, and it adumbrates the times of the Messiah. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's Commentary says, "It refers to the whole future including Messianic days, which is the last dispensation." The gospel writers considered that they were living in "the last days." The statement of Peter at Pentecost can have no other meaning. The writer to the Hebrews says, "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." (Heb. 1:1, 2.)

The Book of Daniel, especially the dream-image of Nebuchadnezzar, occupies such a prominent place in the millennial theory that it is worthy of careful examination. The first question that presses for answer is the identity of the four kingdoms represented by this composite and imposing colossus of the king-dreamer. The interpretation very definitely states that the head of gold was the kingdom of Babylon of which the dreamer was ruler. "After thee, shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass which shall bear rule over all the earth; and the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron." (Dan. 2:39, 40.)

There is a notable difference of opinion among



scholars and commentators regarding the identity of these kingdoms. Some maintain that they are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

The millennialists found their theory upon this division of the empires. For instance, Rev. James M. Gray, D.D., Dean of Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, in his little book, *Prophecy and the Lord's Return*, page 85, says, "These times would be broken up into four periods coincident with the successive rules of the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman Empires." "The Roman Empire, which, it is to be remembered, is potentially in existence still, forming and controlling the character of the whole world, is towards the end divided into ten kingdoms, to be federated, as our prophet teaches, under one head — the little horn with eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth speaking great things." (*Ibid.*, page 85.) Thus the Roman Empire is not only the fourth in the series represented by Nebuchadnezzar's colossus, but the last world monarchy. All the monarchies that have existed since the Roman Empire was broken to pieces by the northern tribes are not recognized in the king's dream-image. "This colossus represented the Gentile dominion of the world, from the time of Nebuchadnezzar until the end of this age, when Christ shall come again to set up His kingdom upon the earth. Further, it represents this dominion as divided into four world-empires: the Babylonian symbolized by the head of gold; the Medo-Persian by the breast and arms of silver; the Grecian by the belly and sides of brass; and the Roman, by the legs of iron and the feet part of iron and part of clay." (*Ibid.*, page 102.) Again, the author is at considerable pains to prove that the hour of judgment on Babylon is still future, and "the prophecy of Babylon's

destruction is yet to be fulfilled." (*Ibid.*, page 114.)

This is the latest millennial interpretation of the dream-image. It does not agree with Daniel's interpretation, but that does not seem to make much difference, as long as it supplies apparent support to the millennial theory. But there is a wide divergence of opinion among millennialists, in the working out of these kingdoms which creates a suspicion that, after all, their inspiration is not wholly divine. There seems to be a good deal of human frailty and uncertainty in it, that the best of them cannot wholly overcome.

As a matter of fact, there are very serious difficulties in the way of proving that the Roman Empire was the fourth kingdom of this "colossal image," or, for that matter, whether it is anywhere referred to in Daniel as a world power. A careful study of the image as described and interpreted by Daniel, makes it plain that these were political kingdoms, so connected as to produce the image of a complete man, and that they were to follow one another in regular order of succession, each kingdom growing out of the former. The student of history is confronted by the fact that the Grecian Empire of Alexander the Great was divided into four kingdoms of which the Syrian held sway over the land of the Jews for nearly three centuries before the Roman Empire got a footing in Asia. Furthermore, the Roman Empire, notwithstanding Dr. Gray's "potential" existence, whatever that may mean, was broken to pieces as a political kingdom about fourteen hundred years ago.

Some eminent writers on Daniel noting these difficulties and impressed by the extent and power of the Syrian kingdom under the Seleucid Kings, make it the fourth kingdom. But both these theories combine

Media and Persia as one kingdom. Whatever may be the facts of history, the author of the Book of Daniel looked upon these as two distinct kingdoms. It is his view that we must take, for he is both the discoverer and interpreter of the Imperial dream. He closes the account of Belshazzar's sacrilegious feast with the statement, "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom." (Ch. 5:30, 31.) He dates his own vision by the great river Hiddekel "in the third year of Cyrus King of Persia." (Ch. 10:1.) While he repeatedly records appeals to "the laws of the Medes and the Persians which altereth not" (Chap. 6:8), he clearly distinguishes between the two kingdoms. There certainly was a period when the Medians under Darius ruled over defeated Babylon. Darius re-organized that kingdom, by appointing over it "an hundred and twenty princes which should be over the whole kingdom; and over these three presidents." (Ch. 6:1, 2.) He also made a decree "unto all people, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth." (Ch. 6:25.) Furthermore, in the vision of the ram and the he-goat (Chapter 8), clear distinction is again made between the kingdoms of Media and Persia. "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last." (Verse 3.) The interpretation is, "The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia." (Verse 20.)

"The ram had *two horns*; that is *two kingdoms*, viz., *Media and Persia*; but one was *higher than the other*; and the higher *came up last*. *Media*, signified by the *shorter horn*, was the more ancient of the two king-

doms. *Persia*, the *higher horn*, had come up but lately, and was of little historic or political importance till the time of Cyrus; but in the reigns of this prince and his immediate successors, Persia attained a political consequence greatly superior to that possessed at any time by the kingdom of Media; therefore, it is said to have been the *higher*, and to have *come up last*." (Dr. A. Clark's *Commentary*.) The second kingdom was to be inferior to the first and also the third. This was the relative strength of Media, which we identify as the second kingdom. Therefore the four kingdoms that were before the writer of the Book of Daniel were: Babylon, Media, Persia, and Grecia. If the unity of the book is to be maintained, the various visions described therein, predicting the rise and fall of kingdoms, must be consistent with each other.

In the vision of the four great beasts that came up out of the troubled sea (Chapter 7), and the vision of the ram and the he-goat (Chapter 8), Grecia is clearly defined as the fourth great kingdom. In the latter vision, Babylon does not come into view. Its fate had been sealed. It is only the three: Media, Persia, and Grecia, that are yet to make history. Grecia is featured as the rough he-goat, and "the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king." (Ch. 8:21.) The identity of Alexander the Great as this king is unmistakable. When he died, the kingdom was divided into four parts, according to the vision, "Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation." These visions do not give the historical events in regular historical order, hence the difficulty in the absence of reliable and complete contemporary history of obtaining a perfectly satisfactory explanation of every detail, and of filling

in the gaps. Any attempts to do this would be foreign to the purpose of our study. We therefore confine ourselves to the general outline of events as indicated by Daniel.

The fourth beast, having subdued the earth, produced ten horns. (Chap. 7:7.) But previous to the appearance of these ten horns, there were four horns, and of these one of them, a "little horn," plucked up by the roots the three other horns that were before it. These outstanding features serve to identify the fourth kingdom. Grecia was broken into four kingdoms. "In the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up, and his power shall be mighty." (Chap. 8:9, 22, 23.) This *little horn* was undoubtedly the fierce and terrible Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian king, who subdued the other kingdoms of the Diadochi, in which the Grecian Empire was divided. In the Seleucidae dynasty, there were ten kings that preceded Antiochus Epiphanes. This, then, would seem to be the order in which the vision worked out. Grecia, the fourth beast, was divided into four kingdoms, of these one under Seleucus was composed of Upper Asia. The eleventh in the succession of the Seleucid kings was Antiochus Epiphanes, who made conquest of the whole country.

Another point of identity of the fourth kingdom is the mineral characteristic. The change of images involves difficulties, but still common characteristics appear. For instance, the fourth beast "had great teeth of iron; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it." (Chap. 7:7.) The fourth kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar's colossus was part of iron and part of clay. "And the fourth kingdom

shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise." (Chap. 2: 33, 40.) It is difficult to see how in such enigmatical imagery it is possible to get a more complete identity. The fourth and iron kingdom of the colossus, corresponds to the fourth beast with iron teeth, which corresponds with the rough he-goat, with a great horn between his eyes, which was the kingdom of Grecia under Alexander the Great. If this line of identity is correct, and there does not seem to be any other that will harmonize the Book of Daniel, the interpretations of which must be accepted by the true exegete, the four kingdoms of the colossus, or dream-image, were Babylon, Media, Persia, and Grecia.

Objection is urged against Grecia being the fourth kingdom on the ground that "the feet part of iron and part of clay" were divided into ten toes, therefore the fourth kingdom was to be divided into ten kingdoms, whereas Grecia was divided into only four kingdoms, the Diadochi. If this objection were well founded it would rule out the Roman Empire as the fourth kingdom, because it was not broken up into ten kingdoms by the conquering northmen. Many and ingenious shifts have been made to get ten kingdoms out of decadent Rome, but the outstanding feature of them all is the lack of agreement and the evident guesses at the conundrum. Dr. James M. Gray, a leading premillennial teacher, has abandoned the hope of finding anything in history whereby these supposed ten kingdoms can be identified. He is satisfied that the "potential" Roman Empire that is still in existence, in some undefined imaginary way will yet come into view and be broken into

ten kingdoms so as to satisfy the terms of the millennial interpretation of prophecy. He says:

“The prophet teaches that by and by Gentile dominion, as represented in this empire, shall be broken up into ten kingdoms. It is difficult to point out these kingdoms now, but doubtless a new alignment will be made ere long, so that the ten may be easily identified.” (*Prophecy and the Lord's Return*, page 105.)

But does the prophet teach that the fourth kingdom of the dream-image “shall be broken up into ten kingdoms”? There is not a hint of such a division either in the description of the image or in the interpretation. In the vision of the fourth great beast two sets of horns are described, one of “ten horns,” and one of four; of the four one was a “little horn.” But the interpretation says “the ten horns of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise.” These ten kings may not rule over ten kingdoms, they may be successive kings in the same kingdom. We have already given the most plausible historic identity of these kings. After the death of Alexander the Great, the Grecian Empire was divided among his four principal generals. Cassander ruled Greece and Macedonia; Lysimachus in Asia Minor; Ptolemy in Egypt, Coele-Syria and Palestine; and Seleucus in Upper Asia. The ten kings were the conquering Seleucidae.

We now come to the mysterious stone that “was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces.” (Ch. 2:34.) The interpretation is thus given:

“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and a kingdom which shall not be left to other people,

but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the Great God hath made known unto thee what will come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation sure." (Ch. 2: 44, 45.)

A great variety of conjectures have been advanced in explanation of this stone. Perhaps the most fanciful is that of the millennialists, which holds that this victorious stone is yet wholly in the future, and is the millennial reign of Christ on earth, in bodily presence. This conjecture is disproved by the fact that the whole circumstance and setting of the dream make it a matter of immediate vital concern to the troubled king of Babylon. If the destruction of this stone was to be postponed for thousands of years, all cause for anxiety on the part of the king would be immediately removed. But the interpretation distinctly states that the kingdom of Babylon, the kingdom of gold, was to be broken in pieces, by this stone. Some have taken the Roman Empire to be this stone, others have identified it with the Syrian kingdom under Antiochus Epiphanes. While a fairly reasonable argument is worked out in support of both of these hypotheses, none of them fully meet the demands of the whole vision.

First of all, we must keep in view that the stone was not a person, but a kingdom over which God was the ruler. "In the days of these kings, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." (Verse 44.) Not only would this kingdom strike the feet of iron and clay and break them in



pieces, but it would also break in pieces the silver and brass and gold. It was to be set up "in the days of these kings," and break in pieces all these kingdoms. It must, therefore, have been a kingdom that existed contemporaneously with those kingdoms. As there was no such earthly political kingdom, it must have been a heavenly spiritual kingdom, of which the pure and holy of God's chosen people were the earthly citizens.

Daniel was before the king of Babylon, who had destroyed Jerusalem with its holy temple, and had taken the Jews into captivity. Daniel was certainly looking forward to the restoration and the rebuilding of the temple. This hope was assuredly in the foreground of his vision. The restoration took place under Ezra and Nehemiah and began "in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia." (Ezra 1:1.)

We have the counterpart of this STONE in the vision of the four beasts. The dreamer says,

I beheld until the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; and thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the Judgment was set and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the little horn spake: I beheld even until the beast was slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame. As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom that all people, nations, and languages should serve

Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. (Chap. 7: 9-14.)

The following interpretation of this vision is quite full. Evidently the immediate meaning is that Antiochus Epiphanes is "the horn that made war with the saints and prevailed against them." (Verses 8, 21.) All the terms descriptive of this "little horn," his great swelling words, his blasphemies, his war with the saints, and his destruction of Jerusalem, the defilement of the temple, and taking away of the sacrifice, describe this king. The eleventh chapter of Daniel gives an enigmatical summary of the events by which he rose to power, his victories over the neighbouring members of the Diadochi, especially the Ptolemies of Egypt, and his war against Jerusalem, the taking away of the daily sacrifice, and the "abomination that maketh desolate standing in the place where it ought not." (Ch. 11: 31.) The particular account of these attacks upon "the saints of the Most High" is given in the first Book of Maccabees. These books are not included in the canonical scriptures, but they are accepted as fairly reliable history. The account reads:

So Alexander reigned twelve years and then died. And his servants bore rule every one in his place. And after his death, they all put crowns upon themselves; so did their sons after them many years: and evils were multiplied in the earth. And there came out of them a wicked root, Antiochus, *surnamed* Epiphanes, son of Antiochus the king, who had been a hostage of Rome, and he reigned in the hundred and thirty and seventh year of the king of Greece. (1 Mac. 1: 7-10.)

Then follows a summary of his deeds quite in line

with the visions of Daniel, particularly his war against the Jews and his defilement of the temple.

Then many of the people were gathered unto them, to wit, every one that forsook the law; and so they committed evils in the land; and drove the Israelites into secret places, even wheresoever they could flee for succour. Now the fifteenth day of the month casleu, in the hundred and forty and fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Juda on every side; and burnt incense at the doors of their houses and in the streets. (Verses 52, 54.)

Here we have a fulfilment of the prophecies of Daniel regarding the deeds of the "little horn" that came out of the fourth beast. The Ancient of Days, who sat in judgment with the thousands ministering unto him, was none other than the Most High God. "And judgment was given unto the saints of the Most High: and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." (Dan. 7:22.)

But who is the "one like unto the Son of man *who* came with the clouds of heaven, and came unto the Ancient of Days"? The explanation of Archdeacon Farrar on this phase of the vision is a very reasonable and consistent exposition. He says:

That the vision is meant to indicate the Messianic theocracy cannot be doubted, but if we follow the interpretation given by the angel himself in answer to Daniel's entreaty the personality of the Messiah seems at least somewhat subordinated or indistinct. (Dan. 7:15-28.) For the interpretation, without mentioning any person, seems to point only to the saints of Israel who are to inherit and maintain that divine kingdom which has already been thrice asserted and prophesied. It is the "saints" or holy ones, "the saints of the Most High," upon whom the

never ending sovereignty is conferred; and who these are cannot be misunderstood, for they are the very same against whom the little horn has been engaged in war. The Messianic kingdom is here predominantly represented as the spiritual supremacy of the chosen people. Neither here, nor in chapter 2:44, nor in chapter 12:3, does the writer separately indicate any Davidic king, or priest upon his throne, as had already been done by so many previous prophets. This vision does not seem to have brought into prominence the rule of any Divinely Incarnate Christ over the kingdom of the Highest. In this respect the "one even as the Son of man," comes upon us as a surprise, and seems to indicate that the true interpretation of that element of the vision is that the kingdom of the saints is here personified; so that as wild beasts were appropriate emblems of the world powers, the reasonableness and sanctity of the saintly theocracy are indicated by a human form, which has its origin in the clouds of heaven, not in the miry and troubled sea. (Expositor's Bible.)

Another vision of Daniel worthy of examination in this connection, is that of the "seventy weeks." After studying the prophecy of Jeremiah concerning the seventy years' captivity, Daniel prayed unto the Lord, and even while he was speaking, Gabriel, who had previously visited him to help him, and informed him that "seventy weeks were determined upon thy people." This "seventy weeks" is divided into "seven weeks," "three score and two," and "one week."

Very much has been written, with very uncertain results in the effort to define those time limits, and to fix dates. But in those years the very indifferent and conflicting methods in reckoning time, the uncertainty of the starting point, and other difficulties that present themselves to chronologists are very serious problems.

It is quite evident, however, that "the seven weeks" unto the Messiah the Prince and the restoration and building of Jerusalem, correspond to Jeremiah's sev-

enty years. This is the period from the captivity under Nebuchadnezzar to the restoration under Cyrus. The Authorized Version instead of translating the Hebrew of these passages, has given us a transliteration capitalized, which gives the impression that Messiah here means Jesus. The Revised Version corrects this by translating and making it read, "Unto the Anointed One, the Prince." But who was this anointed prince? Commentators differ, but as the restoration was under Cyrus, king of Persia, whose spirit was stirred up by the Lord (Ezra 1:1), he is accepted by some eminent scholars as the anointed prince. This is agreeable to the prophecy of Isaiah, "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden." (Isa. 45:1.)

"After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself." (Dan. 9:26.) This is so like the cutting off of Jesus that one is inclined to settle in his mind at once that this was the immediate meaning of the prophet. It is quite natural to suppose that the prophet had before him some event connected with the kingdoms he was defining. As the "seven weeks" pointed to the time of the restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah, so the sixty-two weeks would point to some outstanding event in Israel's history connected with these kingdoms. We get a clue in the fact that while the "seven weeks" points to the restoration of Jerusalem, the sixty-two weeks to the destruction of "the city and the sanctuary" by the people of the prince. This destruction was under Antiochus Epiphanes, as we have seen above, whose war against "the saints of the Most High" occupies such a large place in the Book of Daniel. But who is the Messiah that would be cut off? The same peculiarity of translation

is found here as in the preceding passage. The Revised Version reads, "The anointed one be cut off." When Antiochus Epiphanes destroyed Jerusalem, Onias III was the rightful high priest and he was foully murdered.

"There can be no reasonable doubt that this is a reference to the deposition of the high priest Onias and his murder by Andronicus." (Farrar, *Expositor's Bible*.) This startling event is thus described in the Maccabees.

Wherefore Menelaus, taking Andronicus apart, prayed him to get Onias into his hands; who being persuaded thereunto and coming to Onias in deceit, gave him his right hand with oaths; and though he was suspected by him, yet persuaded he him to come forth of the sanctuary: whom forthwith he shut up without regard to Justice. For the which cause not only the Jews, but many also of other nations took great indignation, and were much grieved for the unjust murder of the man. (2 Mac. 4: 34, 35.)

Thus "the anointed one" was cut off. Following this, there was a restoration under Judas Maccabæus, and the overthrow of the power of Antiochus Epiphanes. The detailed history of these times as given in Daniel and the Maccabees, as well as other writings, is most interesting and illuminating.

Some scornfully reject this exposition of Daniel, because they think it eliminates from these prophecies the Messianic hope. In this they err greatly. While they assuredly deal with the immediate conflicts and sufferings of Israel, under the oppressive world empires, they look forward to an ultimate triumph that can have its realization only in Christ and His gospels. There are in the prophecies of the Old Testament the immediate and the more remote fulfilments. History certainly

repeats itself. For instance, while the murder of the high priest, Onias III, is an undoubted fulfilment of the prediction, "After three score and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off," the crucifixion of Jesus is the more complete fulfilment. By some methods of computation, the sixty-two figure out the exact number of years from the restoration under Cyrus "the Anointed Prince" to the cutting off of Jesus, but there is such a variety of computations, and such a confusion of versions that it is practically impossible to obtain any harmony in the dates. It is better to recognize the actual facts that we have not sufficient data to determine exactly how the prophet computed the time, and therefore we are unable to eliminate all the apparent discrepancies. This in no way discredits the predictions. It simply admits what every scholar must, that there are things we do not know.

It may be asked,— Do these great epochs in Israel's history satisfy the predictions of a general pardon of sins and reconciliation as predicted in Chapter 9:24? Of course in all the Messianic prophecies there is a fulness of hope and salvation that overreaches all historical fulfilments, which can be explained by the fact that the prophets held in view that ideal state which can have its complete realization only in the fulness of the heavenly glory. It is the "saints of the Most High" in whom there is an end of sin, and complete reconciliation. This passage may apply to the great revival of religion under Nehemiah and Ezra (Neh., Chap. 8), the reformation under the Maccabees, or more particularly the great work of God under the full gospel of Jesus Christ.

This historical interpretation of the prophecies of Daniel gives a sure basis for the Messianic hope, also

the identity and sweep of the everlasting and triumphant kingdom of heaven as seen by the prophet. Thus in the dream-image, Daniel saw this kingdom, "as a stone cut out of the mountain without hands" and breaking in pieces the other kingdoms. Some expositors overlook the fact that this kingdom broke in pieces not only the kingdom of iron and clay, but likewise the kingdoms of brass, of silver, and of gold. No political kingdom did this, or could do it. These political kingdoms followed each other in order of succession. There was no earthly kingdom that existed contemporaneously with all these kingdoms. No millennial kingdom that is still in the future could carry out this work of destruction. Neither was it the gospel of Jesus that broke down these kingdoms because they had all passed into history centuries before the advent of Jesus. The only remaining explanation is that it was the sovereign rule of the invisible God that set up these kingdoms, allowed them to fulfil their destiny, and then broke them down.

This is certainly the import of the vision of the tree which so troubled the king of Babylon, the first great king. (Chap. 4.) This was the interpretation of Daniel. "Till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." (Chap. 4:25.)

The "stone cut without hands" indicated the kingdom, not of the literal Israel, but of the ideal Israel, "the saints of the Most High" (Chap. 7), which is composed both of Jews and of Gentiles. "The divinest side of Messianic prophecy is the expression of that unquenchable hope, and of the indomitable faith which are the most glorious outcome of all that is most divine in the spirit of man. That faith and hope never have



found even an ideal or approximate fulfilment save in Christ and his kingdom, which is now, and shall be without end." (Farrar, *Expositor's Bible*.)

This ideal kingdom of heaven is an everlasting kingdom. It is not to be estimated merely by the people who adhere to the literal Israel, whether the ancient, or the larger Israel of the gospel. The invisible hosts of heaven are a vital force in this kingdom. Paul describes it as "the whole family in heaven, and in earth." (Eph. 3:15.) The Ancient of Days in Daniel's vision had associated with Him "thousand thousands who ministered unto him." (Dan. 7:10.)

The kingdom of heaven is everlasting. No breaks of human history can interrupt its continuity. Even though there may be a general apostasy, there are always the hosts in heaven, and on earth "a remnant according to the election of grace." (Rom. 11:5.)

While the kingdom of heaven,—the realm and rule of God, both in heaven and in the hearts and lives of men,—always has been in existence, its revelation to the world has been marked by great epochs in human history. For instance, the giving of the Law on Sinai, and the advent of Jesus and the revelations of the gospel. Between these two events, there was a very checkered religious history, of lapses and revivals, under the rule of the theocracy, and the kings. There grew up the school of prophets who expounded the law and preached righteousness. These had constantly before them the final triumph of righteousness. Though the prophets themselves evidently did not understand the full meaning of the predictions they were sometimes led to make under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they foresaw the ingathering of the nations under the rule of God, and the coming upon the world of the univer-

sal blessings of the kingdom of heaven, "when the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14; Heb. 8:10-12.)

Thus what the bud is to the flower, the law and the prophets are to the gospel. Jesus strongly emphasized this relationship. He said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the Prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." (Matt. 5:17.) His teaching of the extent and power of the kingdom of heaven is that it would overcome all opposition and fill the whole earth with its light and salvation. This teaching He put forth in the delightful parables of the "mustard seed," and the leaven in the measures of meal. (Matt. 13:31-33.)

Here we meet a strange perversion. Millennialists interpret these parables to mean that the whole world will be so permeated and overwhelmed with evil that it will be involved in helpless, hopeless ruin under the gospel dispensation. The only hope for the world is the second coming of Christ. There must be something radically wrong with a theory that leads its adherents to such a misconception of truth. But they say that leaven is a symbol of sin. "As leaven permeates the whole mass of meal and (leavens or) changes its nature; even so sin will permeate the whole church of Christ, and destroy its purity and faith." Of course, they quote scripture to enforce their argument and make it convincing. Jesus said unto His disciples, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (Matt. 16:6-12), meaning their false teaching. Paul also wrote, "Purge out, therefore, the old leaven that ye may be a new lump. . . . Let us keep the feast, not with leaven of malice and wickedness." (1 Cor. 5:

6-8.) In these connections, leaven does symbolize sin. But that is no proof that it must symbolize sin in every connection. If that were true the meaning of the parable would be: "The kingdom of heaven is the principle of moral corruption that shall permeate the church until the whole world is corrupt." That is a strange gospel to preach. There is certainly no hope or inspiration in it. As a matter of fact, the teaching is so preposterous that one is appalled to think that any intelligent Christians can entertain it for a moment.

It is the permeating, transforming power of leaven that makes it such a striking symbol of sin. The same qualities make it equally impressive as a symbol of the regenerating power of divine grace or the kingdom of heaven. It was this power of saving grace that Jesus emphasized by the parable of the leaven. This symbol is carried beyond the individual atoms that form the mass to the mass itself. Not only is the individual believer saved, but the group of individuals who form the society is leavened by the gospel of the kingdom. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened." (Matt. 13: 33.)

The parable of the mustard seed is also perverted to teach that the church is to grow as a shelter for evil persons which corrupt it beyond hope. These are represented by the fowls of the air that lodge in its branches. This feature of the parable is only incidental to its completeness. Even then there is no reason for supposing that the fowls are intended to mean evil people. The feature to be emphasized is the phenomenal growth from the most insignificant beginning to the greatest proportions. This represents the growth of the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 13: 31, 32.)

But our attention is turned to the preceding parable of "the wheat and the tares." Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while he slept the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way." (Matt. 13: 24-30.) We are assured that the tares in the field represent evil persons in the kingdom of heaven. A glance at the interpretation of Jesus will show the absurdity of this contention. Jesus said, "The field is the world. The good seed are the children of the kingdom." (Matt. 13: 38.) Therefore, the field in which the tares were sown is neither the kingdom of heaven nor the church. The kingdom of heaven is not like unto the field but "like unto the MAN who sowed the good seed" who "is the Son of Man." (Verse 37.) The good seed, and they alone, are the children of the kingdom. The children of the wicked one, or the tares, are not in the kingdom, but in the field,—the world.

The kingdom of heaven and the organized church are not identical. He would be a bold person who would claim that all church members are in the kingdom of heaven; there may be many who are not members of any church and yet who are in the kingdom. When millennialists begin to argue that the world is growing worse, and the church is decadent; and quote scripture to prove that this is according to the divine plan and cannot be otherwise, it matters not how things appear; they seem to take it for granted that the church was a strong and flourishing institution when Jesus spake these parables, whereas it was only being revealed. It was not until Pentecost that the full gospel was preached and the real work of world evangelism was commenced.

The kingdom of heaven is not a visible earthly organ-

ization. It is the sum total of the moral principles and spiritual powers under the ministry of the Spirit of God operating through spiritual agencies to rescue men from sin and save them for eternal glory. Paul gave a swift definition when he said, "For the kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink; but righteousness and joy and peace in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 14:17.) This is the kingdom Jesus held in view when He said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness." (Matt. 6:33.) It is also this kingdom that Jesus likened unto "a man who sowed good seed in his field"; "a grain of mustard seed which grew into a great tree"; and "leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened." No evil principle or person can enter into this kingdom. Jesus is authority for the very emphatic statement, that "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3.) Only by the leavening power of the kingdom of heaven, under the operation of the Spirit of God, has any millennialist ever obtained salvation from sin and acceptance with God. He has not been saved by virtue of correct views and theories on the second coming of Christ, but because of his repentance toward God, and faith in the crucified Jesus, as the only and all-sufficient Saviour. By this same process of repentance and faith multitudes have been saved who are not premillennialists, in fact, have no definite opinions on the subject. The faith that has been so efficacious in saving men and women through the centuries still has virtue to heal all who will accept Jesus as the world's Redeemer. In spite of millennial pessimism, the kingdom of heaven has been leavening the world with its marvellous evangelizing energy and saving power. The fact that the

whole world has not been leavened and saved is no evidence that God intended that it should not be, or that God has given the kingdom over to "the man of sin" to be wholly corrupted by him.

The figures of these parables of the "mustard seed" and "the leaven" are more comprehensive and illuminating than may appear to the casual reader. The growth of the seed, and the operation of the leaven depend upon fixed favorable conditions. Both the seed and the leaven must have favorable climatic as well as other conditions. For instance, the seed will not grow in the winter season. The leaven must be properly mixed in the measures of meal, and kept at a suitable temperature, or it will not leaven the mass. In like manner, there are definitely fixed conditions upon which the extension and development of the kingdom of heaven among men is determined. If it is asked why, after nineteen hundred years, the world has not been evangelized, or why the kingdom of heaven has not made more rapid progress, the ready answer is that the conditions of progress and Christian evangelization have not been complied with. The success of the apostolic period and the first centuries demonstrate the possibilities, as do also the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with their grand evangelizing movements and missionary enterprises. For over a thousand years, Christianity was chilled into torpidity by its unfortunate political alliances, theological controversies, and slavery to ritualistic observances. Since the beginning of the Reformation, the tides of religious reform and evangelism have surged up and down, but every new movement has reached a higher level. If in these times there seems to be a recession of evangelistic zeal and fervor, it may be merely the forerunner of another of those great re-

vivals of religion such as marked the eighteenth century. In any case, it is no evidence that the gospel is inadequate for the salvation of the world, or that an entirely different dispensation must be established under the bodily presence and rule of the returned Lord. That an enormous amount of evangelizing work is yet to be done before the world will be saved is recognized by all intelligent Christians. This is no reason for decrying the gospel. It is a trumpet call of God for a deeper consecration and more self-denying service of Christ on the part of all Christians. If the churches of the world will conform more perfectly to the conditions of the gospel, the leaven of the kingdom of heaven implanted in this world by the lowly Nazarene, will continue its leavening work until the whole lump is leavened.

This truth, of the early teaching and parables of Jesus, was strongly emphasized by Him after His resurrection. In His conversations with His disciples in which He prepared them for the great work of world evangelization committed unto them, we have the last words of Jesus on this subject.

Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." (Luke 24: 45-47.)

Just before the ascension He said, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." (Acts 9: 8.) Then we have the great commission which is given in a slightly different

language by the evangelists, Matthew and Mark. One gives the general statement, the other is more individual. Matthew records it, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go, ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations." (Matt. 28:18, 19, R. V.) Mark, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15.)

The explanation that Jesus did not intend that every person would accept the gospel, or that the whole world would be converted, but only that "the gospel should be preached in all the world for a testimony of Him" as a justification of the millennial view that the gospel was not intended for the world's salvation is too flimsy a subterfuge for serious consideration. The clear and unmistakable meaning of the language of Jesus is that the preaching of the gospel to every creature is a distinct divine call to repentance and salvation. That this is the divine purpose of the gospel is certainly established in the charge, "Make disciples of all nations." If any who hear refuse to repent and obey the gospel, "their blood is upon their own heads." If any who are sent fail to present a true testimony of the gospel, they have to give an account of their stewardship unto God.

This divine commission is in perfect harmony with the teaching and predictions of the law and prophets. The only conclusion, therefore, is that the objective of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the complete evangelization of all nations, by the preaching of the Word to every creature even unto the uttermost parts of the earth. It was under the obligation and inspiration of this divine commission that Paul wrote, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the



Jew first, and also to the Gentiles.” (Rom. 1:16.)

The scriptures certainly make it clear that it is God’s plan for the church to evangelize the world by the faithful preaching of the gospel of Jesus. He said, “Ye are the salt of the earth.” “Ye are the light of the world.” (Matt. 5:13, 14.)

Dr. S. D. Gordon in one of his *Quiet Talks* represents the angel Gabriel talking with the Master over the world’s salvation. Gabriel says:

“Master, you died for the whole world, down there, did you not?”

The Master replies, “Yes.”

“And do they all know about it?”

“Oh, no: Only a few in Palestine know about it so far.”

“Well, Master, what’s your plan? What have you done about telling the world that You died for them? What’s your plan?”

“Well, I asked Peter and James, and John and Andrew, and some more of them down there, just to make it the business of their lives to tell others, and others still, until the last man in the farthest circle has heard the story and felt the thrilling and thralling of it.”

And Gabriel answers, with a sort of hesitating reluctance as if he could see difficulties in the working of the plan: —

“Yes, but — suppose Peter fails. Suppose after a while John simply does not tell others. Suppose their descendants, the successors away off in the first edge of the twentieth century, get so busy about things that they do not tell others. What then?”

And back comes that quiet voice of Jesus:

“Gabriel, I haven’t made any other plans — I’m counting on them.”

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FULNESS OF THE GENTILES

**T**HE relation of the Jews and Gentiles in the kingdom of God forms a very interesting and illuminating topic of study. Under the Mosaic economy, the lines of racial and religious distinctions were closely drawn and rigidly observed. The times and conditions demanded this insulation of Israel to preserve the true faith. Was that insulation intended to be an eternal provision, or simply a temporary expedient? According to the millennial scheme, the Jews must be preserved as a separate and distinct people, throughout both the gospel and millennial ages. There is nothing definite beyond the millennial period, but the inference is that this distinction must continue eternally. It is not in the divine plan that they should be converted by the gospel. Now they are dispersed among all nations, and must remain in this scattered condition until the end of the gospel dispensation. But when Jesus comes again to establish His millennial kingdom, they will be gathered together from the four corners of the earth and re-organized under their old national banners. They will be exclusive proprietors of the Holy Land, with rebuilt Jerusalem as their capital city and the world metropolis and the returned Messiah as their king, occupying the restored throne of David.

This gospel age is "the times of the Gentiles," that is, during this gospel dispensation, the world is being ruled by Gentile kings, in the absence of Jesus from the earth. These times began when Nebuchad-

nezzar, king of Babylon, destroyed Jerusalem, and took the Jews into captivity. The millennialists are not agreed as to the exact beginning. Some claim that it was when king Zedekiah was taken captive, while others insist that the exact date of beginning was when Jehoiachim was taken to Babylon. Whichever date is taken, according to millennial reckoning, "the fulness of the Gentiles" has been reached, therefore the millennial kingdom of God must be at hand. They also discover many signs of the times, agreeable to their mathematics and logic, that "the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," that this age is closing, and Jesus is coming immediately to dethrone the Gentile kings, and establish His glorious millennial reign.

In former chapters we have reviewed the millennial theories of "the throne of David," and the thousand year reign of Jesus. We have shown that their scripture proof-texts do not justify their conclusions, and their interpretations seriously detract from the glory and power of Jesus, to "save his people from their sins." (Matt. 1:21.) It is not necessary to examine the "signs of the times" by which these prophetic interpreters attempt to prove that these are "the last days." Suffice it to note that these "signs of the times" have been doing duty for over a thousand years, and the passing centuries have repeatedly disproved them, and shown their advocates to be false prophets. Of course they give a long array of scripture texts to support their contentions, but from generation to generation, they have to do a great deal of recasting arguments, re-adjusting proof texts, and explaining, because their predictions of "times and seasons" have not materialized. All this raises serious doubts concerning the basis and accuracy of their calculations,

their ability to read correctly "the signs of the times," notwithstanding their loudly acclaimed special divine illuminations.

In our study of the scriptures, we must remember, that they are cast in Hebrew thought and manner of expression. The racial and national characteristics and peculiarities of the Jews predominate. The prophets setting forth the glories of the coming Messiah and His triumphs, featured the whole as the triumphs and glories of Israel. Consequently, later generations, giving these predictions a purely national and material interpretation, were led to expect the political restoration of the kingdom of Israel under the Messiah, and when this was not realized, they quickly concluded that the claims of Jesus were sufficient evidence that He was an impostor. As we now study these prophecies in the light of gospel history, we can see how the Jews made their disastrous mistake by taking literally the highly figurative imagery of the prophets. The aim of the prophets was to reclaim their people from idolatry, and inspire them to loyal devotion to the God of Israel. While in attempting this, they featured the national triumphs under the Messiah and included the Gentiles in all the blessings of the new state, they foresaw the happy union of Jews and Gentiles under the standard of Christ, and the "golden age" when "the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea."

The questions now before us are: Was it the plan and purpose of God to keep the Jews distinct from the Gentiles through all dispensations? Is the fact that for two thousand years the Jews have remained a distinct people proof that God ordained it so, in order to have them a separate and exalted people in a coming dispensation? Is it the design of God in a coming age

to bring the Jews into the kingdom of God as a distinct race and irrespective of faith and character to exalt them above their Gentile brethren, and compel Jew and Gentile to assume the relative positions in the new age that they occupied under the Mosaic economy?

All are agreed that the Hebrews were the chosen people of God. To them were "committed the oracles of God." (Rom. 3:2.) Through them, the pure principles of religion were preserved, and the revelations of God were developed until, "the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law that they might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. 4:4, 5.) This election of Israel, however, was provisional, and preparatory to the fulness of time when the gospel of Jesus would be given to the whole world, and all nations would be brought to a knowledge of the true God. The provisional character of the Mosaic economy is clearly and convincingly explained in the Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews. A discussion of the reasons for electing Israel for a special people, and so providentially preserving them through the centuries until Christ came to fulfil the law and the prophets, does not come within the range of the present work. We simply note the fact in passing that the whole situation might be before us.

The divine purpose in calling Abraham and preserving his seed was not to establish and develop a political kingdom, but to bring the people of the world under the moral government of God. The development of the kingdom of Israel was not designed and inspired by God. It resulted from the people's perversity, and contrary to the divine will. The people were ambitious to have a king, and be like the surrounding nations. This

was a rejection of God and the theocracy. One of the unfortunate results of the organization of the kingdom was the development of national pride and racial prejudice. Of course, the Mosaic economy insulated the Israelites by prohibiting intermarriage with idolatrous nations. This was a wise provision to preserve the purity of their religious faith and worship. The aim and purpose of God as revealed in the ritual of Leviticus and the discourses of Deuteronomy were to build up a people in righteousness and true holiness, that through them salvation might come unto the whole world.

Back of the Mosaic economy is the Abrahamic Covenant which formed its ground work. This Covenant with Abraham was not national or racial. It included all nations. When God called Abram out of Haran, He said, "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:3.) As the covenant promise developed, God said repeatedly, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 18:18; 22:18; and 26:4.) Peter, when preaching in the temple, quotes this prediction as giving the sweep of the covenant promises to be fulfilled in Christ the Prophet like unto Moses, saying, "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenants which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." (Acts 3:22-25.) Paul in his epistle to the Gentile Galatians gives a detailed exposition of these covenant promises, and how they were being fulfilled to the nations by their conversion through faith in Jesus, "even as Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. . . . And the Scriptures fore-

seeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, 'In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; so then they which are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.'" (Gal. 3:6, 8, 9.) He proceeds to show how Christ fulfilled the promise, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. . . . He saith not, and to seeds as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed which is Christ." (Gal. 3:14, 16.)

The covenant promises make no distinctions between the Jews and the Gentiles in their relations to salvation through faith. "For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not made to Abraham or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." (Rom. 3:13-17.)

We turn to the prophets, and find that their visions of the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom were to come alike upon the Jews and the Gentiles. This is pre-eminently true of the predictions of Isaiah, the Messianic prophet. A few representative passages are sufficient to indicate the line of research. In a most glowing description of the offices of Christ in the gospel dispensation, the prophet is inspired to say,

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring judgment unto the Gentiles." (Isa. 42:1.) It is to be noted that judgment in this place means "the law to be published by Messiah, the institution of the gospel," and is equivalent to "he shall bring salvation to the Gentiles." This interpretation is vindicated by verse six, "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and will give thee for a covenant to the people, for

a light to the Gentiles.” (Isa. 42:6.) And again He said, “It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” (Isa. 49:6.) Study carefully this prediction. “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall rise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: All they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then shalt thou see and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.” (Isa. 60:1-5.)

The subject of this chapter is the great increase and the flourishing condition of the church of God by the conversion and accession of the heathen nations. This subject is displayed in the most splendid colours under a great number of images highly poetical, and sets forth the triumphs of the gospel and the perfecting of the church of God. Jesus and the faithful worshippers of God saw in the gospels the fulfilment of these prophecies. When the parents of Jesus brought Him into the temple for circumcision, the aged Simeon “took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said, ‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a



light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.'” (Luke 2:28-32.) When the Jews created a disturbance in the synagogue in Antioch in Psidia, Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, “It is necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you: but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, ‘I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.’” (Acts 13:46, 47.) When a prisoner in Rome, Paul preached the gospel to all who came unto him. “He expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets from morning until evening.” When some of the Jews believed not he recalled the prophecies of Isaiah, and added, “Be it known, therefore, unto you, that the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles and they will hear it.” (Acts 28:23-28.)

The intense prejudices of the Jews against the Gentiles are well known. These were so deeply imbedded in the Jewish mind and sentiment, that in spite of the divine commission, the apostles, being loyal Jews, could not condescend to go to the nations with the gospel of light and salvation. At Pentecost and after, the whole thought and attention of the apostles were occupied with ministering to the Jews. Even when an urgent call for instruction came from the Roman centurion Cornelius, it required a special and startling revelation, to enable Peter to break through the entanglements of Judaism, and minister unto this devout proselyte to the worship of the true God. (Acts 10.) He had to learn, that he whom God had cleansed is not common

or unclean. When Peter reached the home of Cornelius and heard his stirring experience, so completely in harmony with his own vision, he realized the sweep of the divine commission, "Go ye, therefore, and preach the gospel to every creature," and he said, "I perceive of a truth that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him." (Acts 10:34, 35.) But this break with Jewish prejudice raised a strong protest from his brethren at Jerusalem, and he was called upon to appear before the church, and explain his irregular conduct. They of the circumcision were so incensed over this pollution of the life of the church that they contended with him, and preferred the serious charge:

"Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised and didst eat with them." (Acts 11:3.) Peter met their charge frankly and "rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them," closing with this silencing challenge: "Forasmuch, then, as God gave them the like gift as he did us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace and glorified God, saying, 'Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.'" (Acts 11:17, 18.)

The next great event preparatory to the fulness of the Gentiles was the conversion of Saul of Tarsus and his call to be "the apostle to the Gentiles." He gave the explicit terms of this divine commission in the account of his conversion given to King Agrippa. He said, "And I said, 'Who art thou, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee

for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which I have seen, and of those things in thee which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.' ” (Acts 26:15-18.)

It was in the Gentile city of Antioch that Paul and Barnabas were formally ordained to missionary work (Acts 13:1-3), and from which they set out on their great missionary tours among the Gentiles. But strong opposition developed against admitting the Gentiles into the full privileges of the Christian communion without circumcision. That is, a strong section of the disciples contended that the Gentile converts must become really Jews before they could be saved and enjoy the covenant blessings. This was the first great controversy that divided the Christian church into contending parties. So great was the dissension and disputation in Antioch, created by some men who “came down from Judea,” that Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem to consult with the other Apostles, and a general council was called to consider the matter. “When there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them:

Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God which knoweth the hearts bear them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now, therefore, why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers

nor we are able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they. Then all the multitude kept silence and gave audience to Paul and Barnabas declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. (Acts. 15: 6-12.)

In this discussion of the relation of the Jews and Gentiles to the kingdom of God under the gospel of Jesus, there is no question of political organization or rule. It was purely a question of religious rights and liberties. The decision of the council was that God had put no difference between the Jews and the Gentiles, but had received both into His kingdom on equal terms of faith and repentance, where they enjoyed equal privileges, without the Gentiles having to submit to circumcision and the ritualistic observances of Judaism. This decision brings into bold relief the fact that the Mosaic law and covenant of the wilderness and the subsequent political organization, were only provisional, had become effete, and were abolished by the gospel of Jesus and the kingdom of heaven which they foreshadowed. Here we get the point of distinction between the old and new covenants, so discriminatingly discussed and clearly defined in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is a very common mistake to think of the Old covenant as contrasted with the New, as the entire Old Testament, including the ancient covenants with Abraham and the Patriarchs. A more careful reading will show that it was the Mosaic Covenant of the Wilderness, the law of ordinances that gave place to the new or gospel covenant. (Compare Heb. 9 with Ex. 24: 3-8.) When this provisional covenant was fulfilled in Christ, the gracious promises of the Abrahamic covenant came into full view. This was the basis of

Paul's theology as he explained in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians. Even circumcision was a provisional rite in its outward administration, but everlasting in its internal and spiritual symbolism. The universal provision of salvation by faith, preceded circumcision, its sign and symbol. Abraham was justified by faith. He "believed God and it was accounted unto him for righteousness." (Rom. 4:3.) There has been no change in this condition and principle of salvation. Under the gospel, "All that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts 13:39.) The identity of the Abrahamic and gospel covenant is established, for under both, salvation was by grace not by the works of the law, or the ritualistic observances. Thus "the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." (Rom. 4:13.) "Therefore, it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all. (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations) before (margin, like unto) him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things that be not as though they were." (Rom. 4:17.) The ceremonial law, or Mosaic Covenant, that came between the Abrahamic Covenant and the fulness of the gospel in Jesus, did not annul or modify this ancient gospel promise to the world. Paul is at considerable pains to explain this. He said:

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written "cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree": that the blessing of Abraham

might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannuleth or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. (Gal. 3:13-18.)

These scriptures make it sufficiently clear that there are not two gospels, one for the circumcision and one for the uncircumcision, as some millennialists contend. There is one gospel for Jews and Gentiles universal both in its principles and in application, and this gospel was confirmed by God to Abraham when He promised, "In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

It is true that Paul speaks of the gospel of uncircumcision being committed unto him, and the gospel of circumcision being committed to Peter. (Gal. 2:7.) He, however, could not possibly mean that there were two distinct gospels, or that there was one set of conditions for salvation for the Jews, and another for the Gentiles, because all his teaching and work was a protest against such a racial discrimination. He was simply emphasizing the fact of his divine call and apostleship to the Gentiles, and he refers to the Jerusalem Council where the relations of Jews and Gentiles in the kingdom of God were finally settled as far as he was concerned. The Apostles and elders were also satisfied that God put no difference between them. Paul meant, he was the apostle to the Gentiles, while Peter's

ministry was to the Jews of the dispersion. Yet Peter was the spokesman at the Jerusalem council who convinced the Apostles and elders that both Jews and Gentiles were received into the kingdom of heaven on the same condition of faith.

It is admitted that there is a noticeable difference between Peter's presentation of the gospel to the Jews, and Paul's preaching to the Gentiles. But there is a similar difference between Peter's sermons to the Jews, and his sermon to Cornelius and his friends. We also note a marked difference in Paul's discourses at different times to different people. This must of necessity be so in all true gospel preaching, because different peoples of diverse religious systems and degrees of intellectual attainments have to be approached and taught in different ways to get them to accept the same truths. For instance, Paul's sermon on Mars Hill, to the philosophical Athenians, is very different from his sermon to the heathen worshippers of Jupiter at Lystra. (Acts 17: 16-31; Acts 14: 15-18.) The difference is not in principle but in the phase of truth, best suited to the occasion and the methods of presentation, and get the right point of contact and lead the people unto repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The great mistake of those who discover irreconcilable differences between Peter and Paul, is in taking fragments of truth and treating them as if they were the whole, and making artificial distinctions that were never intended.

Peter and Paul are perfectly agreed that under the gospel of Jesus, "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10: 34) and He "hath put no difference between" (Acts 15: 9) the Jew and the Gentile, "For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon

him.” (Rom. 10:11, 12.) The racial exclusiveness of the Jews had to give way before the preaching of the gospel of Jesus, and all men everywhere were put on a common level before God. In this, “the righteousness of God without the law is manifest, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all that believe; for there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:21–23.) Therefore, God “now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.” (Acts 17:30.) The breaking down of the distinctions between the Jews and Gentiles maintained under the old Mosaic covenant is very lucidly and forcefully expounded by Paul in this language, “Wherefore remember that ye being in times past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.” (Eph. 2:11–17.) Again, while urging this obliteration of all racial and national distinctions by the gospel of Jesus, Paul says, “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s then are ye Abraham’s



seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3: 27-29.) In one of Paul's most fervid exhortations to unity and good will, he writes, "But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, and filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after Him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all and in all." (Col. 3: 8-11.)

Any theory of religion or interpretation of scripture that attempts to break through this unifying principle of the gospel of Jesus, and keep alive the old racial and national distinctions of pre-gospel times grossly perverts the truth of God, and vainly endeavors to turn aside the divine purpose as revealed in Jesus. The millennial theory that makes the world's salvation contingent upon the maintenance of the insulation of the Jews, and the restoration of their political solidarity and sovereign glory, is seriously at variance with the plain and emphatic teaching of the scriptures.

The millennialists urge as a necessity for a millennial reign, the estranged position of the Jews. They argue that the Jews have been cut off by God to make way for the salvation of the Gentiles. There must be a change of dispensation, and the Jews restored to their own land before they can be saved. This change and restoration will take place when "the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." This period they interpret as "the times of the rule of the Gentile kings." But when did the fiat of God go forth closing the kingdom of heaven to the Jews as a people? Where is the injunction to be found prohibiting the salvation of the Jews

by the gospel of Jesus? We can find no record or intimation of it in the scriptures. The Jews were the chosen people of God. Jesus was a Jew, and "salvation is of the Jews." (John 4:22.) All the apostles and first Christians were Jews. The Pentecostal assembly to whom the full gospel was first preached were Jews, and among them were representatives of all the dispersion. Three thousand of them were converted that day and formed the first Christian Church. Following the Pentecostal baptism many thousands more were baptized and added to the church. Nearly thirty years after Pentecost, Paul returned to Jerusalem after his third missionary tour. Trouble was brewing and the venom of the people was focused on him because he preached to the Gentiles that they could be saved without becoming Jews. The Apostle James and those associated with him in the church at Jerusalem, advised Paul to perform his vow in the temple, hoping this would allay the bitter feelings, and the suspicions of the Jewish Christians in the city. In urging their reasons, they said, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are that believe; and they are all zealous of the law." (Acts 21:20.)

Paul, himself a Jew of the purest type, always recognized the priority of the rights and privileges of the Jews. In his missionary tours he always, in every place, sought out the Jews and began his work among them. He made it a point to attend the Jewish services in the synagogue on the Sabbath and speak to the people there. When there were not enough Jews to support a synagogue he sought out the few Jewish families, as he did at the Roman colony of Philippi when he went out to the riverside on the Sabbath to worship with the few women assembled for prayer. (Acts 16:

13.) Thus the Jews formed the nucleus of practically every Gentile church. The apostolic order was, "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Rom. 1:16.)

The only intimations of the Jews being shut out of the kingdom of heaven, were when they were rebuked for their unbelief and the rejection of the gospel. This was not a wholesale cutting off of the race, but a matter of individual unbelief. Take for instance, the case in Antioch-Psidia when a section of the Jews, incensed, because Paul put the Gentiles on an equality with them, opposed the preaching of the Apostles. "Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, 'It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.'" (Acts 13:46.) There is no intimation that God had cut off the Jews either as a race or as individuals. These people themselves were their own judges, and judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life, put the word of God away. That is, they would not listen to it. The door of faith was open just as wide to these Jews as to the Gentiles, but they chose to remain in unbelief. Were, then, the Jews, as such, disinherited by God, and so excluded from the benefits and blessings of the kingdom of heaven that there is no hope for their salvation under the gospel? The millennialists contend that they were so disinherited because they rejected Jesus, the Messiah king, and crucified Him as a malefactor. But if this were so, how does it happen that there was such an ingathering of Jews at Pentecost and for many years after? The very fact that the first gospel work was by and among the Jews, absolutely disproves the millennialist contention. The Jews as a race were not disinherited because of the

crime of Calvary. The possibility of divine forgiveness was extended to the immediate participants in that crime. Jesus from the cross prayed, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34.) No Jew ever was denied forgiveness and shut out of the kingdom because of the crucifixion of Jesus. That crucifixion itself opened the way of forgiveness to all Jews, as well as to all nations. No Jew is rejected by God, except for his personal unbelief. Long ago, God disproved the proverb, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." (Ezek. 18:2.) "Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." (Ezek. 18:19, 20.) But we have a more sure word of prophecy. The Lord Jesus Himself said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not His son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but He that believeth not is condemned already, because He hath not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God." (John 3:16-18.)

But the millennialists claim to find support for their contention in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, where he speaks of the natural branches (the Jews) being broken off, and the wild olive tree (the Gentiles) being grafted

in among them. (Rom. 11.) Did the apostle mean that the Jews as a race were cut off from the kingdom of God, so that they could not believe to the saving of their souls? How could he advance such a theory when he, himself, was a Jew saved by grace, who constantly preached the gospel of salvation to the Jews and saw multitudes of them saved?

Paul is simply urging the fact that salvation is by faith in Jesus for both Jews and Gentiles, and both are saved on the same conditions and principles. This is the great theme of the epistle which he states at the beginning in these clear and forceful terms, "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (Rom. 1:16.) His whole argument is a rigidly logical development of this theme, and every statement must be interpreted consistently therewith. Following out his line of reasoning, he had to deal with the reprobate Jews, "the disobedient and gainsaying people." (Rom. 10:21.) This raised the question of God's continuous fidelity to His covenants, and he conclusively settles it thus, "I say, then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew." (Rom. 11:1, 2.) "This last clause is a condensed syllogism which means, when God chose this nation, He chose them with a perfect knowledge of their entire history. To suppose that now He cast them off entirely as a nation would argue fickleness in God. Therefore we cannot suppose that God has cast them off." (*Handbook on Romans*, Rev. N. Burwash.) Paul from this leads up to the fall of the Jews and its relation to the salvation of the

Gentiles, and shows how God was able to use even the fall of His people, for His own glory in the enrichment of the world. "For if out of the circumstances which brought about their temporary fall, and their reduction to a mere remnant, God has brought salvation and riches to the Gentiles, what might have been the result, and what yet may we expect when the whole body are found working into God's purpose?" (Ibid.) But it was only some branches and not the whole race that was broken off. Paul said, "And if *some* of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them." (Rom. 11:7.) This is true to the history of the gospels. It was only the unbelieving Jews that were broken off. The believing Jews formed the living tree among whose branches the Gentiles were ingrafted.

In another place, Paul emphasizes the same truth under the figure of a foundation. Writing to the Gentile Christians at Ephesus, he says, "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone." (Eph. 2:19, 20.) Holding for the time Paul's figure of the olive tree, the natural branches were not arbitrarily broken off by God, neither do the wild olive branches enjoy the life and vigor of the natural tree as an arbitrary gift of God. Paul holds very tenaciously to the fact of individual responsibility, and strongly emphasizes the probationary character of the relations both of Jews and of Gentiles to the kingdom of heaven on earth. Lest any might think that God was dealing racially with the Jews, and was cutting off the innocent because they

were members of the Jewish race, he hastens to define clearly the individual responsibility, and proves that it was only those who "believed not" who fell, and that the Gentile Christians had no grounds for boasting, because they stood by faith, and if at any time they turned away in unbelief, they also would be cut off with the unbelieving Jews. This passage is so definite and discriminating that we quote in full.

Thou wilt say, then, The branches were broken off that I might be grafted in. Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches take heed lest He spare not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell severity; but toward thee goodness, if thou continue in His goodness, otherwise, thou shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. (Rom. 11:19-23.)

It is a serious perversion of the teaching of Paul, to make it appear that the Jews as a race were so cut off by God that they must remain in their unbelief and isolation, until a new dispensation comes in, when they will be gathered together from the four corners of the earth, restored to Palestine, and re-established as an autonomous sovereign nation, and saved in the kingdom of God. Or, in other words, making the moral salvation of the Jews contingent upon their national sovereignty and solidarity. Such a thought did not come into view. Throughout the whole discussion, Paul deals exclusively with his great theme of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and shows that in their relations to God, under the gospel, the Jews and Gentiles have equal chances and responsibilities. There is no superiority except that of religious faith

and character; and no failures but such as result from personal unbelief and sin. At the very outset of his argument, Paul clearly stated these fundamental principles. He said:

And thinkest thou this, O Man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation, and wrath, tribulation, and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first and also of the Gentile; but glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God. (Rom. 2: 3-11.)

The Jews are put first because as the chosen people they enjoyed the first privileges and opportunities, and consequently upon them came the first responsibilities to glorify God, and carry the full light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ unto all nations. Racial and religious prejudices, bigotry, exclusiveness, and unbelief led them to reject their Messiah, and precipitated their fall from their divinely ordained prerogatives. But it was only those who believed not who were broken off. All who believed were accepted of God, and to those believing Jews we owe our knowledge of salvation through faith in Jesus.

These discriminating facts of the gospel of salvation Paul held with the utmost tenacity. He had them in full view when he wrote that perplexing passage:



For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in past has happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, and so all Israel shall be saved: As it is written, there shall come out of Zion a deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins. (Rom. 11:25-27.)

All the premises of this passage forbid the conclusion that Paul is predicting the future political history, and national relations and prospects of the Jews and Gentiles. His whole argument is devoted to the religious fortunes of these naturally antagonistic peoples in the kingdom of grace under the gospel of Jesus Christ. The idea of another dispensation superseding the gospel, and putting salvation on an entirely different basis from that contained in the covenants of grace, does not enter his thought and has absolutely no place in his argument. The covenant of saving grace, which he emphasizes by his quotation from Isaiah, was to him a perpetual covenant which makes no provision for an hiatus of thousands of years. He saw the salvation of Israel in process of accomplishment, and that it would be greatly accelerated by the Gentiles entering into full covenantal relations with them, and sharing equally "the sure mercies of David." The millennial interpretation which makes salvation contingent upon the racial and political distinctions of the Jews and Gentiles, not only does a grievous injustice to the broad and profound conception of the Apostle to the Gentiles, but seriously perverts the whole teaching of the gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus.

Paul's argument refers us back to the council of Jerusalem when the relation of the Gentiles to the covenants of Israel, and to the Deliverer who came out of

Zion first came under the official review of the infant Church. After giving careful consideration to the representations of Peter and Paul who were chiefly responsible for carrying the gospel to the Gentiles, the Council accepted Peter's conclusion, that "God put no difference between us and the Gentiles, purifying their hearts by faith," "But we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we will be saved even as they." (Acts 15:9, 11.) The Apostle James, the Chief Apostle in Jerusalem and presiding elder of the Council, gave the closing address and advised sending an ecumenical letter to the Gentile churches assuring them of an equal status under the covenants. "Then pleased it the Apostles, and elders with the whole Church, to send chosen men of their own to Antioch with Paul and Silas." (Acts 15:22.)

James, in sustaining the claim of Simeon (or Peter), that "God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out a people for his name," makes the sweeping statement that, "to this agree the words of the Prophets" (Acts 15:14, 15), and gives this characteristic and representative quotation from the Prophet Amos: "After this will I return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord who doeth all these things." (Acts 15:16, 17; Amos 9:11, 12.)

It is very significant that James applies this prophecy to the conversion of the Gentiles, and saw in the extension of the Christian Church the return of the Lord and the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David that had fallen down. He does not quote as looking into the

distant and unknown future for the fulfilment of the prophecy, neither does he allude to a second coming of Christ at the consummation of the gospel age to save the Jewish race. The Council was dealing with a great problem then pressing upon them, because of the marvellous ingathering of the Gentiles under the missionary work of Paul and Barnabas, and the hostile attitude of many Jewish Christians. The dissension was threatening to divide the Church on racial lines into two hostile camps and was calling for settlement. James, the Jewish leader of the Church at Jerusalem, said in effect,

“Why, this conversion of the Gentiles under the Messiah is what the prophets have foretold. The Lord has returned in saving power and the tabernacle of David which was fallen down is being rebuilt.” He did not refer to the material building of the temple which was standing in their midst, but to the true sanctuary worship of God that had fallen into decay and was being restored. With this application of the prophecy, the opponents of Paul and Silas were silenced. If these keen disputants had not believed that the prophets who foretold the return of the Lord meant the advent of the Messiah for the salvation of men under the gospel dispensation, they certainly would have raised a strong objection to this application to the conversion of the Gentiles without demanding their subscription to the law of Moses. No such protest was raised, and with the unanimous sanction of the council, Paul entered more enthusiastically into his missionary work among the Gentiles, and developed his theology along the lines laid down in that first encyclical letter, insisting that in the kingdom of God “there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is

rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. 10:12, 13.)

We are compelled to interpret in harmony with this teaching of Paul, that perplexing statement of Jesus, "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (Luke 21:24.) This prediction was made in reference to the pending destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and has been literally fulfilled. The people were slain by the edge of the sword and led away captives, and Jerusalem was trodden down of the Gentiles. Some expositors have experienced much difficulty in defining, "Until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." The millennialists interpret it to mean when the rule of the Gentile kings has ended, and Christ has assumed His millennial reign over all the nations. But such a revolutionizing theory needs more support than one or more obscure passages of scripture. Any exposition of this passage that makes it conflict with the great body of New Testament teaching must be rejected. Even the fact that for nearly two thousand years Jerusalem has been trodden under foot of the Gentiles is no evidence that the gospel is inadequate for the world's needs, and a new dispensation must be inaugurated to supplant Gentile rule. In fact, there is no intimation that Gentile rule is to be displaced by a revived Jewish hierarchy. The burden of the prediction of Jesus was not political but religious. The effete Jewish hierarchy was to be swept aside by the destruction of Jerusalem, because it had not only drifted away from God, but set up an impassable barrage to the people's return to God. The

law which was intended to be a school master to bring the people to Christ had become a stumbling block and a rock of offence, and had to be displaced by that faith which was made the way to God both for Jews and for Gentiles. This great religious revolution occupied the centre of the field in the predictions of Jesus. The political changes mentioned are only incidental to increase the prominence of the religious reformation under the gospel. History supports this view. The whole Jewish dispensation was ended with the destruction of the temple, and all means of continuing the sacrifices and elaborate ceremonialism, that so hindered the Jews from accepting the simplicity of the gospel, were abolished. It was then that the great expansion of the Gentile church began. From this time the Church grew rapidly until it dominated the religious life of Europe and to-day is the great evangelizing agency of the world. This great religious movement is the fulfilling of the "times of the Gentiles," or as Paul expresses it, "The fulness of the Gentiles." (Luke 21: 24; Rom. 11: 25.)

The question is raised as to whether these expressions of Jesus and Paul refer to the same event, or do they indicate different events in the development of the history of Christianity.

It must be recognized that they were used under very different circumstances in different connections and for different purposes. In neither case was the political rule of Gentile kings or nations the burden of thought. Both Jesus and Paul were occupied with the spiritual salvation of the world, and on the one hand, were dealing with the disastrous results of unbelief and disobedience, and on the other, the blessings and saving power of faith and devotion to truth.

Jesus was predicting the destruction of Jerusalem and the final overthrow of the Jewish nation, as the result of their rejection of His Messiahship, and the ingathering of the Gentiles into the kingdom of God through the reception of the gospel. While the gospel was preached throughout the known world before the destruction of Jerusalem, it was not until after the destruction of the Holy Temple, and the abolition of the sacrificial offerings that the Gentile churches attained the position of ecclesiastical supremacy. This evidently was "the times of the Gentiles" to which reference is made.

Does "trodden down of the Gentiles" mean to be under the government of Gentile rulers, or to be a scene of ruin and desolation? If it means the former, as is contended by the millennialists, Jerusalem is still being trodden down of the Gentiles. Millennial writers are at great pains to prove this from the prophecies of Daniel, and by an ingenious manipulation of the prophetic days and weeks to prove that the end of the Gentile rule is at hand. But there is such a divergence of reckoning, and time has forced so many readjustments that one has to be very cautious about accepting these interpretations. Just what the outcome of the Great War may be, and what national or political changes it may effect in Palestine cannot be determined at present. The prospects, however, are that even though Jerusalem remains in British hands, and the hope of the Zionists is realized, there will still be a Gentile overlordship. But in the event of Jerusalem becoming a purely Jewish city again, will that be the realization of what Jesus meant when He spoke of "the times of the Gentiles *being* fulfilled"? Surely Jesus had in view something very different.

The phrase, "trodden down," means very much more than being ruled over, even by Mohammedan Turks. It certainly implies, not only complete subjugation, but utter destruction and desolation. This is just what happened under the Romans. Even the foundations of the temple were ploughed over. It remained in a state of utter desolation for about two centuries. Not only the site but the name itself was abandoned. During this period, the Gentile churches extended their influence and power until the Roman Emperor Constantine became the patron of Christianity. The people began to return to Jerusalem, and Emperor Constantine was moved to build the *Martyrion* over the site of the crucifixion and the ancient name was revived. Christianity became so extensive among the Gentiles that the world was divided into five episcopal sees of which Jerusalem was one. (Kurtz, § 46.) The bishops of these sees were recognized as heads of the church universal and were of equal rank with jurisdiction over the patriarchates assigned them. But such Christian sentiment gathered around Jerusalem that "even in Nicea A. D. 325 the bishopric of Jerusalem was declared worthy of special honour." Would not this religious development of the Gentile Church be more in harmony with the meaning of the expression of Jesus, "Until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled"?

The millennialist objection to this is, that Jerusalem is not yet fully restored to the Jews, neither have the Jews been returned to their land. But there is nothing in the prediction of Jesus to warrant the assumption that Jerusalem would ever be restored to the Jews as a centre of a Jewish nation, nor yet of a millennial kingdom, when the "times of the Gentiles were fulfilled." The prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem was ab-

solite. Jesus announces this catastrophe as the end of the Jewish dispensations, or the age under the Mosaic law, when the Jewish hierarchy would be replaced by the Christian Church, as a result of preaching the gospel of the kingdom "in all the world as a witness to all nations." (Matt. 24: 14.) Was not this ingathering of the nations "the times of the Gentiles"?

A careful examination of Paul's expression "until the times of the Gentiles be come in" shows that "the apostle to the Gentiles" holds in view this same event that occupied the mind of Jesus. There is, however, this difference: when Jesus spoke, the conversion of the Gentiles was wholly future; when Paul wrote his Epistle to the Roman Christians, there were Gentile churches at least throughout Asia Minor and in southern Europe. Jesus was predicting to his questioning disciples the pending calamity that was to befall their nation on account of the unbelief of its religious and civil rulers. Paul was writing to Christian Gentiles and endeavoring to harmonize the cutting off of the Jews, "the natural branches," and the grafting in of the Gentiles, "the wild olive tree," by the election of grace. The racial and religious prejudices of the Jews formed a barrier between them and the Gentiles. There was growing up among the Gentile converts a similar wall of prejudice, against the Jews. The consequent misunderstandings and strong party feelings were threatening the purity, peace and the progress of the Christian Church. Paul set himself to the difficult task of allaying, and if possible removing the misunderstandings by explaining the mutual relations and obligations both of Jews and of Gentiles under the saving grace of God. "For if the casting away of them (Jews) be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving



of them be but life from the dead? ” (Rom. 11:15.) In this work he had to deal with apparently strange paradoxes, such as election and free will, as applied to Israel and the world, and the breaking off of the natural branches, while they remained under the mercy of God, and were being urged to be reconciled with God, by accepting Jesus as the true Messiah.

As the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul felt responsible for the spirit and conduct of the Gentile Christians, and was deeply concerned over the manifestations of racial prejudices that were menacing the whole work of God. These people were “being wise in their own conceits” and were failing to rely upon the illumination of the Holy Spirit for a true knowledge, and just appreciation of this mystery of the divine operation of salvation. This is the mystery that Paul would make known to them, that God had not cast off the Jews as a race, but that blindness in part had happened unto them, and they were broken off because of unbelief, but “if they abide not still in unbelief *they* shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in.” He says, “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” (Rom. 11:25.) This time was reached, when after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Holy Temple, the Gentile Christian churches became the dominant religious power in the world. We therefore conclude that both Jesus and Paul had in view the same event. The variations in mode of expression are due to the differing circumstances, connections, and purposes that led to the statement.

The one strong objection urged against this inter-

pretation is that Paul also says in the next statement, "And so all Israel shall be saved"; and all Israel was not saved after the Gentile churches obtained the supremacy. Even in this present time the Jews retain their racial insulation, and rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, and consequently are not saved.

This passage admittedly creates much difficulty for the interpreter, but there are some things that can be stated with confidence. First, there is not a solitary statement in all Paul's argument to warrant the millennialist interpretation that God cast off the whole Jewish race so that Israel cannot be saved until Jesus comes again in bodily presence to set up a millennial kingdom. In fact, Paul's argument refutes any such idea. Second, Paul could not have meant that all Israelites then living would be saved, because they passed off in unbelief. This even the millennialists admit. Neither can it mean that the work of salvation will be retroactive, under a millennial reign, for there is no hint of such a thing. It would therefore seem that he makes the statement supported by quotations from the Prophets to forestall in the Gentile mind the conclusion that salvation was actually denied the Jews, and hastened to assure them that the way of salvation is still open to the Jews if they will accept it by faith. The particle *so* does not express time but manner, and the word *all* is distributive and does not mean the people of Israel *en masse*, but all of Israel who will believe and accept the gospel. The prophetic references present some difficulty because they are not verbatim quotations. There is a decided difference between even the Hebrew and the Septuagint rendering of the original passages in Isaiah. The latter reads, "And to those who turn away from iniquity in Jacob." (Burwash on

*Romans.*) This is in harmony with the ancient covenants and prophets and consistent with Paul's whole line of argument that salvation is a personal matter, and received only by individual faith. This statement, then, is made to keep the emphasis upon the fact that

The door of God's mercy is open  
To all who are weary of sin,  
And Jesus is patiently waiting,  
Still waiting to welcome them in.

The Jews were in blindness now because of their unbelief, but that blindness was not imposed by God, neither was there any divine plan or purpose holding them in unbelief so that they could not be saved. With this fact clearly before him, Paul proceeds to enlarge upon the equitable mercy of God, saying,

For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all. (Rom. 11: 30-32.)

Any interpretation of this intricate and profound reasoning that sets the Jews and Gentiles over against each other in such a way as to make it appear that they cannot both be saved under the same dispensation of gospel grace does unwarranted violence to the teaching of Paul; and casts a serious reflection upon the justice and mercy of God. Paul does not attempt to give a detailed explanation of the apparent paradoxes of his teaching upon the election and grace of God. He does not even claim to understand all he is saying, but he is sure that in the mind and purpose of God these paradoxes find a perfect harmony. He is therefore satisfied

to outline the general principles of the operations of God's mercy and grace, as being sufficiently comprehensive to include in the divine scheme of salvation all who believe whether Jew or Gentile, and sufficiently discriminating as to debar all who disbelieve irrespective of their national descent or religious antecedents, "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." (Rom. 11:29, 33.)

As he meditates upon these exalted glories of the gospel, the immeasurable reaches, and unfathomable mysteries of God's grace and mercy, he exclaims, "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are thy judgments and thy ways past finding out." (Rom. 11:33.)

Thus under the gospel of Jesus there are no racial distinctions or barriers. The divine call to repentance is to "all men everywhere." (Acts 17:30.) There is no plan or decree of God that prevents any person from believing and obeying the gospel unto salvation. The work of grace began in Jerusalem with the newly baptized Jewish disciples on the great day of Pentecost, and the work of grace spread with divine power, until the racial barriers were burst asunder and the Gentiles were received into the Church on equal terms with the Jews, without the Jewish rite of circumcision. This was in fulfilment of the terms of the ancient covenants, and prophecies. The coming of Jesus "to save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21) was in "the fullness of time." (Gal. 4:4.) This gospel age, as described by Paul, is called, "the dispensation of the fullness of times" (Eph. 1:10), that is, "the plan by which God has provided salvation for a lost world."

As the work of the gospel in course of time passed from the Jewish to the Gentile Church, the responsi-

bility for evangelizing the world now rests upon Gentile Christians. We today are looking forward to a more energetic propaganda of the gospel of salvation through faith in Christ, in world-wide evangelism. As "the fulness of the Gentiles" comes in, the work of evangelizing the Jews will be accelerated, and the converted Jews will join with their Gentile brethren in the glory of their common Lord. Why have not the Jews been converted? The answer to that question is, **PREJUDICE**. The prejudices of these Jews have blinded them to the true meaning of their scriptures. Paul noted this sad fact. When preaching in Antioch in Psidia he said, "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of their prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him." (Acts 13:27.) And again in his epistle to the Corinthians, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Cor. 2:7, 8.)

This was "the blindness in part" that happened unto Israel. This blindness caused by their prejudices has kept the Jews out of their inheritance of salvation. Then their inveterate racial exclusiveness has prevented them from mixing with the nations among whom they have been dispersed.

On the other hand, in spite of the teaching of Paul, strong prejudices developed against the Jews among the Gentile Christians. These prejudices began to show themselves very early in the apostles' missionary work and Paul felt impelled to warn his converts against this mother of many vices. After the destruc-

tion of the temple, those prejudices grew very rapidly, and serious disabilities were imposed upon the Jews in every land where Christians held sway, and Jew baiting became an amusing pastime. They were denied all rights of citizenship and treated with the utmost contempt. The excuse for such treatment was, that they, or their elders at Jerusalem, had crucified the Lord Jesus. Thus the disciples missed the spirit of their Lord and forgot His prayer on the cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

Those familiar with history know the disabilities imposed upon the Jews in the British Isles, and every country in Europe, and the long hard fight these brethren of our Lord have had to obtain any civil rights. This is all the explanation that is required for the insulation and stolid unbelief of the seed of Israel. How could they be converted to Christianity while suffering such cruel treatment from so-called Christian nations? It is not an exhibition of ordinary intelligence to shut one's eyes to these hard and cruel facts of history and then try to account for the state of the Jews, by attributing it to a decree of the Merciful Father of all grace. Surely the just and impartial God never intended that His Gentile children should make their Jewish brethren as the filth and offscouring of the earth.

Does any one think this picture is drawn in too strong colors? Then let him pause and analyze the popular feeling of the present time, and the attitude of Christians toward the Jews. Is there any spirit of kindly sympathy toward them even in our Christian churches and communities? True, there are in some centres missions for the Jewish population, but these do not represent the Christian sentiment of the whole community. Speaking generally, is there displayed in

the churches of Christ that full, deep, loving kindness of the Saviour that would lead the Jews to think more favorably of the Christians' claim of the Messiahship of Jesus? The non-conversion of the Jews is due to the unchristian attitude of the churches, and national governments, rather than to the design or decree of God. In a recent interview given *The Christian Guardian* of Toronto, Rabbi Nathan Gordon of Montreal, among other striking statements, had this to say about the relation of Jews and Christians:

Nor do I think there is any chance of Christian and Jew coming together. We have been driven from country to country, hounded and persecuted and despised, deprived of the rights of citizens, outraged and tortured, in the name of religion. Do you wonder if we have had to fight with our backs to the wall? I will say this, that I think, if true Christian treatment had been meted out to us, there would not have been a Jew left today; they would have been of one religion with the Christians." (*The Christian Guardian*, May 17, 1916.)

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE TWO RESURRECTIONS

**T**HE resurrection occupies a very large place in the gospel of Jesus. The apostles treat it as the central truth in the scheme of salvation. Its reality and efficacy is founded upon the well attested fact of the resurrection of Christ. Paul met the attempts to discredit the reality of the resurrection by the sweeping and decisive declaration, "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ is not risen then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." (1 Cor. 15:13, 14.) And again, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." (Verse 17.) Thus the resurrection of Jesus is absolutely essential to the forgiveness of sin, and the hope of glory. It is also the final and irrefutable proof that all the "dead in Christ" shall be "raised up at the last day." (John 6:39, 40.) "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming."

We are in perfect harmony with the premillennialists on these fundamental facts. But they teach that there will be a thousand year period between the resurrection of "the dead in Christ" and the resurrection of the wicked, those who die out of Christ. At the beginning of the millennial period, Christ shall come to set up His earthly kingdom and the "dead in Christ" that are His at His coming will be raised "out of the dead," and will reign with Him a thousand years, while He is



saving the world. At the closing of this millennial period, when the thousand years are ended, the wicked, or "the rest of the dead," will be raised at the final resurrection. These are the distinctions they make between the first and second resurrections.

When one enters upon a philosophical study of this millennial interpretation, many very intricate and perplexing problems press in vain for solution. No millennialist has yet seriously attempted to straighten out the tangle. As we are primarily interested in the teaching of scripture on this profound theme of the resurrection we will confine our investigation to the inspired Word, rather than attempt to follow philosophical speculations.

The first question for our examination is what scriptural proof have we that a thousand years must elapse between the resurrection of the righteous and the resurrection of the wicked? This is the crux of the whole millennial theory.

The millennial method is to take the enigmatical passage of the twentieth chapter of Revelation, work out their theory from that, and then read their interpretation into the gospels and the epistles, thus apparently making out a case. But if their theory is such an essential part of God's plan of salvation as they claim, there ought to be some plain and definite proof of it in the New Testament apart from the Book of Revelation. Instead of following their method and reasoning back from the closing chapters of Revelation, we will reverse the order and endeavor to interpret the Revelation in the light of the gospels. As a matter of fact, there are only a few passages outside the twentieth of Revelation to which the millennialists appeal, and the most important of these are Paul's first Epistle to

the Thessalonians, and the first Epistle to the Corinthians. These we will examine first.

To the Thessalonian Church, Paul wrote:

But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (or go before) them which are asleep. For the Lord, himself, shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thess. 4: 13-18.)

The most critical analysis of this passage fails to disclose the slightest allusion to a thousand years, or any other period of time elapsing between the resurrection of the dead in Christ and the resurrection of the wicked dead. As a matter of fact, there is no reference whatever in the whole passage to the resurrection of the wicked. Paul is dealing exclusively with the resurrection of the saints, and the translation of the Christians who are alive at the coming of Christ. When he says, "the dead in Christ shall rise first," he does not in any way bring the resurrection wicked into view. The order is not *first*, the resurrection of the saints, and *second*, the resurrection of the wicked, as the millennialists claim. The language of Paul is so clear and emphatic there is no mistaking his meaning. He says, "The dead in Christ shall rise *first*, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them

in the clouds." The question under discussion was whether the living should first ascend to meet their Lord in the air, or whether the dead in Christ should first be raised up and go before the living. Paul deals only with this question. His decision was that the dead in Christ should rise first, then the living saints would be translated. The living shall not go before the dead in Christ.

The stated purpose of Paul was to relieve the grief of those who sorrowed over their faithful dead "as others which have no hope."

He delivers to them three important truths: 1. He asserts, as he had done before, that they who die in the Lord should have, in virtue of Christ's resurrection, a resurrection unto eternal life and blessedness. 2. He makes a new discovery, that the last generation should not die at all, but be in a moment changed to immortals. 3. He adds another new discovery, that, though the living should not die, but be transformed, yet the dead should be first raised and be made glorious and immortal; and so in some measure, have the preference and advantage of such as then shall be found alive. (A. Clark's *Commentary*.)

There is not in this whole passage the slightest shadow of a shred of evidence in support of the millennial theory of a thousand year period between a first and second resurrection.

Another passage requisitioned by the millennialists as proof of a first and second resurrection, separated by a thousand years, is this statement of Paul: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father;

when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power." (1 Cor. 15:22-24.)

How any person can have the hardihood to read into this passage a millennial reign, and then attempt to make intelligent people believe that it was Paul's intention, is one of the marvels. The apostle makes no reference either in this passage or its connections to the state or resurrection of the wicked. Consequently, even if the millennial reign were a revealed fact, it does not come within the scope of this discussion. This whole transcendent chapter is devoted to the entrancing theme of the resurrection of the dead in Christ to immortal glory. This triumphant victory over death and the grave has been assured to all the saints by the resurrection of Christ who became "the firstfruits of them that slept." The order mentioned in this passage is not first "they that are Christ's" and "afterward they that are not Christ's." There is no intimation of any millennial period. Any attempt to read such a period into the text does violence to the argument of the Apostle. The order is "Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." No others are mentioned. Therefore, there is no evidence of the millennial distinction of a first and second resurrection. Apart from these two passages the millennialists do not claim any statements either in the Acts or in the Epistles that give any evidence in support of their theory of a first and second resurrection.

The one passage out of which the millennial theory of the two resurrections is evolved is Rev. 20:4-14. It already has been shown that the Book of Revelation is highly figurative and pictorial, and presents serious difficulties to a literal interpretation. As the Gospels and Epistles give no intimation of a thousand year

period between the resurrection of the saints and the resurrection of the sinners, we are justified in asking for more proof than is afforded by this enigmatical passage. It is not sound exegesis to extract a theory from a figurative and obscure passage of scripture, and then make all the clear and open scriptures bend to that theory. It is much more consistent and safe to get the plain meaning of the gospels and then seek an interpretation of the obscure passages of Revelation in harmony therewith. As the apostle John, the author of the Book of Revelation, is also the author of the Gospel and Epistles bearing his name, it is only reasonable to expect to find something there that will give us a clew to his meaning here. We look to the Gospel where he is reporting the words of Jesus and find a description of two distinct resurrections. The Jews sought to slay Jesus because He healed the impotent man at the Bethesda pool on the Sabbath day. Jesus met this menace by identifying Himself with God the Father and urging the necessity of a changed life and character which He described as a resurrection,—passing from death unto life. They marvelled at this, then He predicted the resurrection of the bodies, both of the righteous and the wicked, from the grave. This whole passage is worthy of a close examination. He said:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Marvel not at

this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:24-29.)

Here we have two distinct and quite different resurrections corresponding with the two distinct parts of man's nature, the spiritual and the physical. The first is the resurrection of the soul, or spiritual, from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness. This is the great spiritual change wrought in the penitent believer by the Holy Spirit, and commonly called conversion. The second is physical, the resurrection of the bodies, from the grave, both of them "that have done good," and of them "that have done evil." In verses 24-27, the former or spiritual resurrection is so lucidly described that there is no mistaking the meaning of Jesus. This exposition of the changed life so astonished the people that Jesus passed naturally and with sustained lucidity to the resurrection from the grave (Verses 28, 29) of all men, good and bad, and sets it forth with an emphasis that is most impressive.

This passage is so full of gospel meaning that it is worth while giving it extended study:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me hath everlasting life." Can any one doubt the application of this appeal? "He that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me," certainly means the believer in Jesus then and now, under the provisions of the gospel salvation. The reward of that faith is "everlasting life," not a life that is to be received in some indefinite and unknown time in the future ages, but a gift immediately possessed and enjoyed. This is in harmony

with all the gospel teaching of salvation. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36.) This deliverance from wrath and condemnation Jesus calls a "passing from death unto life" which is undoubtedly a resurrection. In the next verse, Jesus repeats the statement in a little different form to make it more explicit and give it added emphasis. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." The form and terms of this statement preclude all possibility of applying it to the resurrection of the bodies of the saints from the grave. "And now is," expresses definite present time. Even then the dead were hearing the voice of Jesus and were coming forth into life. The only reasonable explanation is "the dead" here means the spiritually dead,—those who were in unbelief and sin. As these heard the voice of Jesus and turned unto God by faith, they passed from death unto life. This is the glorious work of regeneration wrought by the Holy Spirit. (John 3:3-8.)

In all the scriptures, the moral condition of the sinner is described as a state of death. Even before the gospel times, those who practiced idolatry and sin were accounted as dead. Therefore, Jesus was using a figure which was very familiar to the people. Matthew quotes from Isaiah, "The people which sat in darkness saw great light: and to them which sat in the valley and shadow of death light has sprung up." (Matt. 4:16, quoted from Isa. 42:7.) Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, in his song of praise also quoted from Isaiah, saying, "To give light to them that sit

in darkness and the shadow of death.” (Luke 1:79; Isa. 9:2.) It would be superfluous to attempt to quote the many scripture texts which describe the sinful condition as a state of death. A few typical ones from the apostles will suffice to give the clew to the thoughtful student. Paul said, “And you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” (Eph. 2:1.) And again, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” (Eph. 5:14.) John, the author of both the Gospel and the Revelation, says in his Epistle, “We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.” (1 John 3:14.) Here we have convincing proof given, that to John sin and death were interchangeable terms, and that conversion is a resurrection. Paul also caught this supreme significance of regeneration, and insisently urged that this great spiritual change was a resurrection from the dead. He said, “But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were *dead in sins*, hath quickened us together in Christ, (by grace are ye saved;) and hath raised us up together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” (Eph. 2:4–6.) And again, “Buried with Him in baptism wherein also ye are risen with Him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And *you being dead* in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, *hath He quickened together* with Him having forgiven your trespasses.” (Col. 2:12, 13.) “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.” (Col. 3:1.)

“This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the



second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Christ a thousand years." (Rev. 20:5, 6.) That this first resurrection is a spiritual transformation of the saints and martyrs is quite clear from the preceding verse. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them: And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." The "thrones and they that sat upon them," is a picture of "Christianity established in the earth, the kings and governors being all Christians." (A. Clark's *Commentary*.) The souls of the martyred saints had obtained a complete victory over the beast and his images, over all evil, their minds were pure, and their conduct was clean, the mark of the beast was not found either in their foreheads or their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ. They were also priests of God. This is the distinctive honor of all the regenerate disciples of Jesus. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." (1 Pet. 2:9.) "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." (Rev. 1:5, 6.) "This is the first resurrection." The thousand years, the sacred number ten raised to the third power, is symbolic of the completeness of the victory over Satan, in the reign with God.<sup>1</sup>

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." (Rev. 20:5.) This is

<sup>1</sup> See chapter V on the Reign of Jesus.

a key passage of the millennial theory. The thousand years are interpreted as being a strictly literal period of time. The dead in Christ are raised at the beginning of this millennium, and the wicked or rest of the dead, are raised at its close. There is such a diversity of opinion among millennialists regarding the order of the resurrection of the saints that it is impossible to harmonize them. They appear to have all their troubles with the saints or good people. The wicked give them no trouble. There is only one lot of them. The millennialists have a special rapture in which the Church and the Old Testament saints are raised when Christ comes in the air, and the tribulation period in which the tribulation or martyred saints are raised. The order of the first resurrection is "Christ the firstfruits," then they that are Christ's at His coming. These latter are divided into rapture saints and tribulation saints, which are raised at different times. (*Christ is Coming*, by W. E. B., p. 101.) Therefore there are several resurrections of saints but apparently only one resurrection of the wicked.

Jesus said, "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5: 28, 29.)

This passage is so plain that it would seem almost absurd to indulge in any exposition to show that both the good and evil come forth from their graves at the hour the voice of the Son of God calls them. But the peculiar interpretation of the millennialists renders it necessary to analyze the words of the Master. They read a thousand years between the resurrection of

“they that have done good” and “they that have done evil,” making two distinct resurrections; the one at the beginning of the millennial reign, and the other at its close. But there is not the slightest justification for thus arbitrarily separating by any period of time the resurrection of these two classes, which according to the statement of Jesus come forth at the same hour. The connections are so close that they forbid the importation of any extraneous elements. Study the passage. “The hour is coming in the which *all* that are in their graves.” The *all* of this statement is neither particular nor distributive but universal, and means *every one*. It makes no distinction between the *good* and the *evil*.

As if to forestall the possibility of a mistake, and concluding that the *all* includes only the righteous dead, our Lord immediately proceeds to define those who are in their graves, as “they who have done good” and “they who have done evil.” *All* shall be raised. But when shall it be? At two distinct and separate periods? Jesus does not hint such a thing. His language here is definite. “The hour (or time) is coming.” The singular form fixes the resurrection of both classes at one time. If there are to be two distinct resurrections, with a thousand years intervening, the language of Jesus is very misleading. He should have used the plural form and said, “The hours, or times are coming.” The singular number is decisive and forbids any person indulging in such liberties with the Word of God, as to make it mean “hours or times” with a thousand years thrust between them. The contrast between this statement and the preceding makes the language even more definite and decisive. When dealing with the spiritual resurrection from sin to right-

eousness, Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." The phrase, "now is," fixes the time to the present. Even when He was speaking they that believed would pass from "death unto life." This result will follow the exercise of faith in response to the voice of the Son of God to the end of time. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth." The omission of the phrase, "now is," is very significant. The "hour that is coming" is undoubtedly the time which in the next chapter Jesus calls the "last day." (John 6:39, 40 and 44.)

This exposition harmonizes with the whole teaching of the gospel. Nowhere does Jesus intimate that there will be an extended period of time between the resurrection of the good and the resurrection of the wicked. Everywhere He speaks of the two classes as coming forth together. This is very marked in the parables of the kingdom. In His explanation of the parable of the tares, Jesus said, "The harvest is the world. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. 13:40-43.) The gathering out is at "the end of the world." Then "them which do iniquity" are condemned and "cast into the furnace of fire." There is no room here for a thousand years, at the end of which the wicked shall be dealt with.

The parable of the fishing net is equally explicit.

“So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from the just.” (Matt. 13:49.) It is not at the end of the millennial age, but the end of the gospel age, “the end of the world,” that the “wicked are cast into the furnace of fire.” Therefore, the resurrection both of the just and of the wicked will be at “the end of the world.”

The Parables of Judgment teach the same truth. For instance, while the virgins waited for the bridegroom “they all slumbered and slept. At midnight there was a cry made, ‘Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins arose.” (Matt. 25:5, 6.) The wise and the foolish arose together, but the foolish lacking the necessary preparation were shut out of the banquet chamber. How is it possible to force a thousand years between the rising of the wise, and the rising of the foolish virgins? They *all* arose when they heard the midnight cry. The foolish with the wise, because they asked the wise to supply them with oil, “for our lamps have gone out.”

So also in the parable of the talents, when after a long while the lord came to reckon with his servants, they all came forward, the faithful who had used their talents to profit, and the unfaithful who in his wicked slothfulness hid his talent. (Matt. 25:14-30.) Any attempt to thrust a thousand years between the reckoning with the faithful servants, and the unfaithful, destroys the point and pith of the parable. The fact that both classes stood together for the final reckoning is put beyond cavil by the statement, “Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it to him which hath ten talents.” (Matt. 25:28.)

In His graphic description of the great judgment, Jesus gives an impressive picture of the gathering to-

gether of all nations, both the good and the bad. He said, "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." (Matt. 25:31, 32.)

The mental contortions and literary "stunts" performed by some millennialists in their attempts to break the force of this evidence, and read a thousand years into this description of the gathering of all nations, both the sheep and the goats, before the throne of divine judgment, is very distressing to the normal and well-balanced thinker. There is not the slightest justification for such a distortion of the language of Jesus. The good and the bad of all nations must come forth since the representation of the judgment is designed to impress upon the followers of Jesus the duty of works of mercy.

One instinctively turns to the clear thinking and logical Apostle Paul to get the apostolic viewpoint. He outlines the gospel teaching in a representative passage in his second epistle to the Corinthians. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. . . . For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:1, 10.) The terms of this passage are so clear that comment is unnecessary. The Apostle leaves no room to conclude that any extended period of time elapses between the appearance of the good and the bad before the judgment seat of Christ; therefore

there is no indication of a millennial period between the resurrection of the two classes.

The fullest description of this final scene is given in this glowing imagery of the apocalypse.

And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell (margin, "or the grave") delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:11-15.)

The scene here depicted follows the second resurrection. But the millennialists claim that the righteous were "raised out of the dead" a thousand years previous to this great judgment; and that this scene represents the resurrection and judgment of "the rest of the dead" only. If this were true, why should the Book of Life be opened with the other books? Let it be noted that this is the only book that receives specific mention. Only the righteous are recorded in the Book of Life. If all the righteous had been "raised out of the dead" a whole millennium before this resurrection and judgment, there are no rational grounds for introducing here the Book of Life. This figure of the books is peculiarly Jewish. Moses, when praying in heart anguish for idolatrous Israel, and fearful lest the awful sin could not be forgiven, pleaded, "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin —; and if not, blot me, I pray thee

out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, 'Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.' " (Ex. 32:32, 33.) Interesting references are found in the Psalms of this Book of God. (Psa. 56:8; 139:10.) Malachi speaks of the book of remembrance which was written before the Lord for them that feared Him. (Mal. 3:16.) The Rabbinical writings between the Old and New Testaments placed great emphasis upon the books of God, particularly the Book of Life and the book of death. The Rabbins evidently based their teaching on the visions of Daniel, which read: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." (Dan. 7:9, 10.) The description given here of the Judge upon the throne is so similar to those in Revelation that one is forced to the conclusion that John wrote with the visions of Daniel before him. This imagery was familiar to the Jews because it occupied a large place in the apocalyptic writings of the Rabbins. Daniel says also, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince that standeth for the children of Thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as there never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time they shall be delivered, and every one that shall be found written in the book of life." (Dan. 12:1.) John makes several references to the Book of Life. (Rev. 3:5; 13:8;



21:27.) This Book of Life contains the record of God's people, those who are worthy of eternal glory. Therefore, the opening of this book at the resurrection and the judgment of the dead, as described in the twentieth chapter of Revelation, is proof of the presence of the righteous dead whose names are written therein. There is no reason for introducing the Book of Life for the judgment of the wicked. Their names are in the book of death. The procedure outlined by John deals with both the good and the bad.

“The books were opened: and another book was opened which is the Book of Life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” (Rev. 20:12.) The whole setting is that of a general judgment in which all the dead, whether in Christ or out of Christ, come forth to be judged “according to the deeds done in the body” as they are written in the books of God. They whose names are written in the Book of Life shall receive the full rewards of the righteous, they whose names “are not written in the book of life shall be cast into the lake of fire.” (Rev. 20:15.) This vision of John on Patmos harmonizes with the visions of Daniel, the parables of the kingdom, the parables of judgment and the definite declarations of the Apostles in their epistles. In all these statements, there is no provision for a thousand year period between the resurrection and judgment of the righteous, and the resurrection and judgment of “the rest of the dead.” All “the dead great and small,” the good and the bad, all classes and conditions of men appear together before the great white throne and Him that sat upon it, “from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away.” The description is conclusive.

This interpretation is strongly supported by the repeated statements of Jesus that He would raise up the believing saints at "the last day." (John 6:39, 40, 44, 45.) This is the time that Paul speaks of as "that day" (1 Tim. 1:12 and 4:8), which is the day of judgment. It is at this time, according to Jesus, that those who believe in Him and receive everlasting life shall be "raised up." (John 6:40.)

The millennialists endeavor to negative these clear statements by arguing that "the last day" is a thousand year period, and the resurrection of the righteous is in the beginning or morning of the day; and the resurrection of "the rest of the dead" is in the closing or evening of the day. Between this morning and evening, or throughout the day or thousand years, the millennial reign of Jesus will be in full glory. It has been shown that the thousand year and millennial reign theories lack scriptural support, therefore, the length of "the last day" is purely a matter of speculation. It may be many more than a thousand years, or it may be many years less. On this point, Jesus and the Apostolic writers are silent, therefore, we have no data for determining its length. The duration of "that day" is immaterial to the truth revealed. They who attempt to fix its limits have little profit for their pains. Peter's statement, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," is the Apostle's way of rebuking the folly of attempting to fix the operations of God within definite time limits.

The inevitable conclusion is that those who hear the word of Jesus and believe on God through Him have everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but are passed from death unto life. "This is the first

resurrection." These shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years, or in perfect security. (John 5: 24, 25.) "On such the second death shall have no power." (Rev. 20: 4, 5, 6.) By the second death is meant, "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1: 9), or what is commonly meant by "final perdition." This is another Rabbinical mode of speech in very frequent use, and by it they understood the punishment of hell in a future life.

Though the soul is vitalized by the power of this everlasting life, the body will die. "This earthly house of our tabernacle will dissolve," but "the hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth." (John 5: 28, 29.) This is the second resurrection. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. . . . Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Cor. 15: 53, 54.) Only the saints of God pass through these two resurrections.

## CHAPTER IX

### JESUS COMING AGAIN

#### *Introduction*

**T**HERE is quite general agreement among Christians that Christ is coming again, but there is a wide diversity of opinion as to the purpose of His coming, and how and when He will come. Is He coming to purify the earth, and establish a new kingdom over which He will preside in actual bodily presence as the supreme ruler? The premillennialists claim that He is and that this coming is imminent. They claim that at His first advent, He was rejected by His own people and ejected from the world. He returned unto the heavens "until the times of restitution of all things" (Acts 3:21), when He will come again, establish His kingdom on the earth, and during His millennial reign make an end of sin and save the world. In the preceding chapters, we have shown that the dispensation of salvation is the gospel of Jesus, and that the millennialist conception of the bodily reign of Jesus on earth for a thousand years lacks scriptural proof. It only remains for us to examine the teaching of the scriptures on the end of the world and the coming again of Jesus.

A common method of interpretation with those who have a special theory or doctrine to advocate is to collect isolated and unrelated passages of scripture that seem to lend countenance to their scheme, and by bringing them together, regardless of their connections, bend them to suit their purposes. By this means, all sorts of fantastic theories may be given a show of scrip-

tural support. The correct and sure method is to study the passages of scripture in their connections and historical setting, and seek the author's viewpoint and trend of thought.

Every candid student of eschatology must recognize the fact that the revelations of the Bible on the future life are only partial. They are lacking in details, and do not attempt to outline a regular and consecutive program. There are consequently many problems left unsolved, and many questions unanswered. We are led up to the border of the illimitable future beyond which we have very little definite information. The attempt to go beyond the limitations of clearly revealed truth is to substitute conjecture and speculation for assured knowledge. One who dogmatizes on conjecture is an unsafe leader. The limitation of Divine Revelation is almost appalling. A noted theologian said of the Bible, "We have a leaf out of one great book, and it begins and ends as it were in the middle of a sentence." In theological studies we are constantly confronted with the fact "that God is the centre everywhere of a science which has its circumference nowhere." And yet in the Holy Scriptures enough is revealed to enable us to understand the law of the Lord, and how to secure salvation and eternal glory. We can accept as conclusive the mandate of Moses, "The secret things belong to God: but the things which are revealed belong unto us and our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

### 1. *The End of the World*

There are some New Testament terms that need defining before we can intelligently appreciate the meaning of Jesus and the apostles when they speak of the

coming of the Lord. Foremost among these is the familiar expression, "the end of the world." The popular conception is that it means the passing away of the heavenly bodies, and the destruction of this material earth and the final ending of this physical universe, or terrestrial world. This conception is so fixed in the minds of some that we may be thought tainted with heresy if we question its accuracy. Before we permit either prejudices or predilections to enslave our reason, it is well to examine carefully the scriptures to reassure ourselves. Our aim must be to learn the thought and meaning of the respective writers.

Before one can fully appreciate the gospel meaning of "the end of the world," it is necessary to understand what the *world* is and when it began.

There are several passages in this connection worthy of careful examination. Paul wrote to Timothy:

Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began: but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: whereunto I am appointed a preacher and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. (2 Tim. 1:9-11.)

The closing clause gives the purpose and point of Paul's argument, namely, the salvation of the Gentiles under the gospel of Jesus on the same terms and conditions as the Jews. This he claims "was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." It is commonly assumed that the expression "before the world began" means before the beginning of the creation of this material earth, or physical world. That, however, cannot be the meaning of Paul because the Greek word

here translated "world" is *aionion* and means *age* or *dispensation*. He is not speaking of the physical world at all, but of the religious *dispensation*. The whole phrase is *pro chronon aionion*, which, literally translated, is, "before eternal times," or "before the times of the ages."

The same expression is used in the epistle to Titus. We quote in full:

Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness, in hope of the eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but in due times manifested His word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour. (Titus 1:1-3.)

Here Paul emphasizes the same glorious truth of the gospel, which he says God "promised before the world began," *pro chronon aionion*, before the eternal times or before the times of the ages. The promise made before the times of the ages was "the hope of eternal life," *zoes aionion*, to be given unto those who receive the gospel preached unto them. If the *eternal times* were before the beginning of the creation of this physical world, to whom was this promise made? It could not have been made to men, because it would be before man's creation. But the Apostle refers to a distinct promise made to the children of men. Therefore, these times must have been within the period of human history. It must refer to the covenants of God with the fathers. But what period could be designated by Paul as *eternal times*? The only satisfactory explanation is, the phrase refers to the age before the giving of the law in the wilderness. The organization of Israel for

sanctuary worship divided the times into various fasts, feasts, seasons and jubilees.

*Pro chronon aionion* is a Hebraism, meaning the Jewish jubilees. The Jews computed time by these jubilees as the Gentiles computed by their generations. Paul links up these two methods of computing time when he speaks of "the mystery which hath been hid from *ages* (*apo ton aionon*) and from generations (*apo ton generon*), but now is made manifest to the saints." (Col. 1:25, 26.) This mystery which aforetime was hid both from the Jews and from the Gentiles, was the inclusion of the Gentiles in the covenants of grace.

There is one other passage that claims attention. In closing his epistle to the Romans, Paul says:

Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret *since the world began*, but is now made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of the faith. (Rom. 16:25, 26.)

Here, again, we have the same mystery, "the commandment of the everlasting God," that all the nations should be the recipients of the promised blessings which was "kept secret since the world began." (*Chronois aionois sesigemenou.*) Literally, *having been kept secret in the eternal times*. As these were promises and commandments made to men, the "eternal times" or "since the world began," must come within the range of human history. These promises were before "the world began," but men did not comprehend the fulness of their meaning nor the sweep of their provisions. When were they made? They are specifically given in the Abrahamic covenant. "In thee shall all the fami-



lies of the earth be blessed." "Thou shalt be a father of many nations," and "Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him." (Gen. 12:3; 17:4, 5; 18:18.) These covenants of grace were for all people. There were no tribal or racial distinctions or limitations. In the development and organization of the Israelites under the eternal statutes, *nomimon aionion*, the Hebrews became exclusive, and lost sight of the universal terms of their covenant which included the nations in its provisions. This was the mystery, which was revealed in Jesus Christ and made known unto the Gentiles by Paul, especially in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians. (Rom. ch. 4; Gal. ch. 3.) The special election of Israel was a provisional and temporary arrangement for the preservation of the true revelation and worship of God "until the fulness of time was come" (Gal. 4:4), when God "sent forth His Son" to redeem all men, establish His everlasting kingdom among men, and bring both Jews and Gentiles into the full enjoyment of salvation by grace through faith. This was the unfolding or manifestation of the mystery kept secret from the "foundation of the world."

The Benedictus of Zacharias, over the naming of his son John was, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David: as He spake by the mouth of His prophets since the world began" (*ton ap' aionos*). (Luke 1:68-70.) Here we have the same words without the modifying *chronos*. Literally, it means *since the age began*. This age covered the period of the law and the prophets. "As He spake by the mouth of

His prophets since the age began." This certainly fixes the time after the Egyptian emancipation. The law and the prophets began with Moses. The burden of the message of the prophets was, "That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us: to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant; the oath which He swore to our father Abraham." (Luke 1:71-73.) This age, or "world," therefore, began after the promise, or oath made to Abraham, and is plainly a religious age or dispensation, not a political dynasty.

Peter preaching in the temple, after the healing of the lame man at the gate Beautiful, said, "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets *since the world began* (*ap' aionos*)." (Acts 3:21.) This is the same expression used by Zacharias, and limited in the same manner to the age of the law and the prophets. This is placed beyond all doubt by the succeeding verse. "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you." (Acts 3:22.)

When the dissension arose in Jerusalem over the reception of the Gentiles into the church without circumcision, a council of all the apostles and leading elders was called to consider the matter. After a full discussion of the question the Apostle James summed up the situation. In his address to the council he said, "Known unto God are all his works *from the beginning of the world*" (*ap' aionos*). (Acts 15:18.) Here the same phrase is used again, which certainly means the same period. It does not mean from the beginning

of the material creation of the world. It may be unreservedly accepted that even before this time known unto God were all His works; but that is not what James said. Here we are not dealing with the foreknowledge of God, but merely with the statement of James, which is that God's plan was before him from the beginning of the age or dispensation of the law and the prophets. Zacharias, Peter, and James use the same phrase in practically the same connections and historical settings, and refer to the same age or dispensation. In every instance, the apostolic use of the expressions "since the world began" and "from the beginning of the world," the reference is either to the covenant of grace made for the nations through Abraham, or the emphasis placed upon these covenant promises by the Prophets. God had ordained from the time He entered into His covenant with Abraham, that He would make the Gentiles, or nations, partakers of the covenant blessings with Israel. (Eph. 1:10.) In "the dispensation of the fulness of times," the promised seed through the blood of the Cross broke down the middle wall of partition, that through the ages of offerings and sacrifices had separated the Jews from the nations, "And came and preached peace to them that were afar off (the Gentiles), and to them that were nigh" (the Jews). . (Eph. 2:17.)

Having shown that by the phrase, "since the world began," the apostles and the people of their time meant the beginning of the Mosaic economy or dispensation, we are prepared to consider the New Testament meaning of the expression, "the end of the world." The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, contrasting the imperfect sacrifices of the sanctuary under the Levitical law, with the perfect offering of Christ for the sins of

mankind, says, "For then must He often have suffered *since the foundation of the world*, but now once in *the end of the world* hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." (Heb. 9:26.) Here we have "the *foundation of the world*" (*apo kataboles kosmon*) contrasted with "the end of the world" (*epi sunteleia ton aionon*). While to the English reader the former expression conveys practically the same meaning as the phrase "since the world began," yet the Greek terms are quite different, and may be taken to mean "since the beginning of the orderly universe." The Greek *kosmos*, like the English *world*, is an equivocal word whose meaning has to be determined by the connection in which it is used. Here the writer is contrasting the imperfect sacrifices offered by the high priest in the holy place of the sanctuary every year with the perfect sacrifice of Jesus offered on Calvary once for all. The former was offered as an atonement for the sins of the worshipping Jews or Hebrews, the latter was an atonement made for all men. "Jesus tasted death for every one" (*Pantos*). (Heb. 2:9.) As the whole discussion is of the relative efficacy of the offerings and sacrifices of the Mosaic economy it is only natural to assume that the expression "from the foundation of the world" used in this connection means from the laying down (*Kataboles*) of the organization of these sacrificial offerings. The real meaning of *kosmos* is an orderly organization. It is applied to the material world or universe only in so far as it is a set order or fashion. The other expression, "the end of the world," is literally *the completion of the age*. This end was when Jesus "appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" and was consummated about nineteen hundred years ago. But the material universe

remained, and still remains unchanged. Therefore, the only conclusion is that this "end of the world" was the completion and passing away of the Mosaic economy which was imposed upon the children of Israel "until the time of reformation." (Heb. 9:10.)

We have still further scriptural evidence that this was the accepted meaning of the phrase, "the end of the world." In his Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul says, "Now all these things happened to them for examples; and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world (*ta tete ton aionon*) are come." (1 Cor. 10:11.) The plural form, "the ends of the world," must have special significance. These "ends" had come upon that generation of the apostles; therefore, they must be events of past history. They also clearly indicate a great religious transition. The only interpretation that will fit all the facts is, the Apostle refers to the completion of the Mosaic economy and the beginning of the gospel dispensation. These expressions were familiar idioms to the Jews of the Apostolic age. The Rabbins divided the duration of time into three parts, or ages; first, the age before the law, or the patriarchal dispensation; second, the age under the law, or the Mosaic dispensation; and third, the age under the Messiah, which to them would be the last dispensation. The generation of the apostles marked the transition from the age under the law, to the age under the Messiah. Thus "the ends of the world," the closing of the old dispensation, and the beginning of the new, came upon them.

The gospel, also, holds in view the end of the age under the Messiah. A few of the parables of Jesus plainly indicate a final adjudication at the end of the gospel age. In the parable of the tares, Jesus said,

“As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world” (Matt. 13:40) (*en to sunteleia tou aionos toutou*). The literal translation is “in the completion of this age.” The emphatic *this* would seem to confine the time to the closing of the age under the law, as the gospel dispensation had not then been fully established. But Jesus said, “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.” (Luke 16:16.) The judgment of the parables would seem, therefore, to come more properly under the closing scenes of the gospel age. Dr. Adam Clark makes this comment:

Some learned men are of the opinion that the whole of this parable refers to the Jewish state and people, and that the words *sunteleia aionos* which are commonly translated “the end of the world,” the end of the age, i. e., the end of the Jewish polity. That the words have this meaning in other places, there can be no doubt; and this may be their primary meaning here; but there are other matters in the parable which agree far better with the consummation of all things, than with the end of the Jewish dispensation or polity.

The same statement is made in “the parable of the fish net” (Matt. 13:49) with this difference, the emphatic adjective *this* (Gr. *toutou*) is omitted. Otherwise, the same comments apply as to the parable of the tares. When giving His great commission to the Apostles, Jesus promised His presence “All the days unto the end of the world” (*prasa tas emeras eos teo sunteleias tou aionos*), literally, “all the days until the completion of the age.” This can mean only until the completion of the age under the Messiah, or the gospel dispensation.

This, then, was the common expression of the times of the Messiah to designate the completion of an age, or dispensation in the religious life or history of the people, whether it be the age before the law, under the law, or under the Messiah. In all correct expositions of eschatology, this fact must be recognized, and the ages differentiated to avoid confusion of thought and erroneous conclusions.

## *2. The Return of Jesus to His Disciples*

The coming of Christ is associated with the end of the world. The millennialists endeavor to work every mention of a coming, appearing, manifestation, or revelation of Jesus into their scheme of a bodily presence and millennial reign of Jesus on earth. This leads to a misinterpretation of scripture, and a serious confusion of thought, as well as a misconception of the purpose and glory of the gospel. There are several events in the development and extension of the kingdom of God that are described in the New Testament as a coming or appearing of Jesus. It is necessary to clear, sound thinking, and an intelligent saving faith in Christ our Lord and Saviour, to distinguish carefully between these manifestations or revelations.

The discourse of Jesus in the historic upper room at the last Passover is intensely interesting. The disciples were much depressed by the repeated announcement of Jesus that He was going to leave them; but He repeatedly assured them that He would come to them again. In this entrancing conversation, He mentioned three different comings for three distinct purposes.

First, after a brief absence from them, He would come to them and give them fuller and more definite

instructions in the kingdom of heaven and their great world evangelizing mission. He said, "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, whither I go ye cannot come; so now I say unto you." Peter became anxious about this saying, and asked, "Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards." (John 13:33, 36.) Later in the conversation, Jesus said, "A little while and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while and ye shall see me, because I go unto my Father." His disciples were much perplexed over this saying and questioned among themselves what it might mean. Jesus knew they were desirous to ask Him, and said unto them, "Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, 'A little while and ye shall not see me and again a little while and ye shall see me'? Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." (John 16:16-20.) This little while can have no other meaning than the time He was absent from them between His crucifixion and resurrection. He told them that after His resurrection He would go before them into Galilee, and meet them there. (Matt. 26:32.) After this, He was with them for a little while. "For forty days He showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs." (Acts 1:3.) During this time He gave them special instruction in the meaning of the scriptures and gave them the great missionary commission. (Luke 24:44-53.) The return to His disciples after His death made patent to them His continued and exalted life, and thereby established their faith in Him as their everlasting Lord.



He also promised His disciples that He would return to them, that they might enjoy His abiding presence. He said, "I will not leave you comfortless (or orphans), I will come to you." (John 14:18, 28.) And again, "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you." And again after His resurrection, and just previous to His ascension, He said, "Lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:20.) But this promised presence is only to those who love and serve Him. Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." (John 14:21.) When Judas questioned the possibility of Jesus manifesting Himself unto them and not unto the world, He replied, "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." (John 14:23.)

Throughout this discourse, Jesus kept the stress on the promise of the Father that the Holy Ghost would come to His disciples after His departure as their special guide, teacher, comforter, and advocate, to qualify them to carry on the work he had begun in the world. Thus unto the Holy Ghost, the third person of the Trinity, was committed the ministry of redemption. Jesus said, "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you." (John 16:7.) Here we are confronted by strange paradoxes.

He was to leave them, and yet not forsake them; to go away, and yet to be with them; to go and yet to come to them. They were to be deprived of Him, their Head, yet orphans they should not be. Another was to come yet not

another; a Comforter from the Father, from Himself; whom, not as in His case, the world could neither know nor see, but whom *they* should know, though they could not see. His own presence with them was a privilege which no tongue could worthily tell. Blessed were their eyes for what they saw, and their ears for what they heard. Better still than even this was to be the presence of the Holy Ghost, who would follow Him as He had followed John. (William Arthur, *Tongue of Fire*, page 3.)

Here we have the three persons of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, clearly distinguished, and yet carrying on together the great work of man's redemption and the world's salvation. While Jesus differentiates between Himself and the comforter who is to follow Him in an abiding ministry to the disciples, He keeps the emphasis on the fact that He Himself is coming again to abide with, and in them. In the parable of the vine He said, "Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine; no more can ye except ye abide in me." (John 15:4.) It is very evident that this abiding presence of Jesus is not in bodily form, but in spiritual power. As God is a Spirit, and ever present with His people, even so the exalted and glorified Jesus is a Spirit and ever present with those that love Him and keep His words. It is an abiding presence that is clear to the spiritual consciousness of the obedient disciple though unknown to the world.

Millennialists object to this interpretation as "spiritualizing." They say, "the coming again of Christ must be a real bodily presence," but a spiritual presence is as real, as a bodily presence. This fact Jude could not understand when Jesus was talking with them, but He assured him that it was true. The religion of Jesus is preëminently spiritual in its nature,

operations, and results. They pervert the fountains of divine truth who deny that the spiritual verities of the religion of Jesus are literally true.

The reason the Jewish rulers failed to understand Jesus, and crucified Him as an impostor was their minds had been so perverted by the materialism of the times that they could think only in physical and political terms. Because of their environment, education, and political expectations, the disciples were at first handicapped by the limitations of the times. As the only possible means of teaching them spiritual truths was by the medium of human language, which was essentially materialistic, Jesus was at a very great disadvantage. In this discourse Jesus undertook to overcome these disabilities and so impart the deeper spiritual realities of religious experience, that these select disciples might rise above the superficiality and formalism of their times and grip the eternal verities of God. But in spite of all His efforts, their political predilections, and materialistic proclivities, barred their approach to the unsearchable riches of heavenly grace and fellowship. It was the recognition of these mental and spiritual limitations that constrained Jesus to say, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He shall show you things to come." (John 16:12, 13.)

Under the full ministry of the Holy Ghost, those disciples learned these mysteries of the kingdom of God, and enjoyed the conscious presence and fellowship of Jesus. It is likewise the privilege of every Christian to enjoy the actual presence of Jesus every day. "For

lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the world," is His great promise.

As in wireless telegraphy there must be a real adjustment and correspondence between the sending and receiving instruments, even so in the spiritual fellowship between the glorified Jesus and His disciples, there must be a true spiritual harmony and sympathy. The vital spiritual connection is attained and maintained only by holy love and obedience. All our spiritual adjustments, relations, and experiences depend upon our fidelity to the principles of devotion, love, and obedience.

There is yet another coming again emphasized by Jesus in this upper room discourse. He said, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14: 2, 3.)

Millennialists rob this charming promise of its comfort for dying saints by denying any "coming again" of Jesus until the end of the world, when they say He will come to establish His millennial kingdom. This is a most arbitrary way of wresting sacred language. The Father's house of many mansions is not "yet future." It has a present existence, Jesus spoke of it as existing when He was going away. In fact, the Father's house of which He speaks so familiarly, is heaven, God's dwelling place. Jesus claimed to have come down from heaven (John 3: 13), and after His resurrection He ascended to heaven again. The place He went to prepare for His disciples is, therefore, in heaven, not on the earth. It is forcing language beyond all the limits of reason to say that the place Jesus went to prepare

for those disciples is on this earth and after nineteen centuries is still unprepared. There could not be much consolation for those troubled ones in such a far-off hope. "That where I am, ye may be also," cannot mean that in the very place in which He was then assembled with His disciples, He would receive them after His return. If He were speaking of His return from the grave this might be a permissible interpretation, because after His resurrection, He did meet with His disciples in that upper room. But then He did not receive His disciples, they received Him, and entertained Him. That was not His Father's house. The natural and consistent interpretation of the language of the text is that Jesus meant the home of the saints in heaven. "I go away" meant His ascension to the right hand of God, "Far above all principalities, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." (Eph. 1:21.) It is this exalted heaven where God the Father is that the glorified Jesus entered to prepare a place in which to receive His disciples. Just what that preparation was to be is not stated, but this is apparently what Paul meant when he said, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Cor. 5:1.) The eternal Son of God could only speak in the present tense. "Where I am ye may be also," is the natural way for Him who said, "Before Abraham was, I am," to express eternal abode with Him in the mansions of glory. The time when He would come and receive them unto Himself was when their sacrifice and service on earth was over and they were prepared to enter the many

mansions of the Father's house. This does not mean that death is the work of God, or the coming of Christ. It simply means that when the faithful saints depart this life, Jesus comes to receive them into His Father's house. The experience of Deacon Stephen, the first Christian martyr, is an exact fulfilment of this promise. When the rulers gnashed upon Stephen with their teeth, he "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." (Acts 7: 54, 55.) The vision of Stephen was of the glorified Jesus prepared to come and receive him into the prepared place, when the enemy death had done his work. It is not an uncommon thing for dying Christians to report to their watching friends that they have visions of their Lord coming to meet them. This interpretation of the promise of Jesus is a great source of consolation to the suffering saint who is approaching the dark valley of death.

While the promise, "I will come again," in this passage may not be strictly confined to the Lord's reception of the dying saint, there is nothing in its connections to warrant the millennial interpretation that Jesus meant He would come again at the end of the gospel age and prepare this earth as a dwelling place for the saints. The place in the many mansions was the place to which He was going immediately. Jesus went into heaven, the Father's house. It is here that He now sits at the right hand of God to make intercession for transgressors. It is from thence He comes to receive His disciples unto Himself. When the disciples depart this life they will go to be with Jesus. This was the hope and desire of Paul. The draw of the heavenly home upon his heartstrings was so great that

he was "in a strait betwixt two" and knew not which was the better, to remain in the Lord's work with His friends on earth, or to enter the communion of the saints in heaven. He said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh this is the fruit of my labor. Yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." (Phil. 1:21-24.)

### *3. The Coming of the Lord at the Destruction of Jerusalem*

In the poetry and prophecy of the Jews, great demonstrations of power, whether of national victory or defeat, were ascribed to a coming, appearance, or presence of the Lord. When King David celebrated his grand victory over the Philistines and gave thanks for his deliverance from the enemy, he sang:

Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because He (God) was wroth. There went up smoke out of His nostrils, and fire out of His mouth devoured, coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also and came down, and darkness was under His feet. And He rode upon a cherub and did fly: and He was seen upon the wings of the wind. And He made darkness pavilions round about Him, dark waters and thick clouds of the sky. (2 Sam. 22:8-12; Psa. 18:7-14.)

This is clearly the hyperbole expressed in poetical imagery — a literary license common to all languages, but quite characteristic of the Hebrew. Here is another passage:

The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice, let the multi-

tude of the isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. A fire goeth before Him and burneth up His enemies round about Him. His lightnings enlighten the world: the earth saw and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. (Psa. 97:1-5.)

This poetical imagery permeates the writings of the prophets. It was from these characteristic figures of their national literature that both Jesus and His disciples drew their startling figures to set forth the blessings and judgments of God. Hence, it was natural for them to call any national calamity, "a coming" or "day of the Lord." These facts must be given due consideration in every interpretation of the New Testament, particularly in the study of eschatology. This apocalyptic style is very marked in the teaching of Jesus, especially in Matthew's report of his predictions of the end of the world, and the coming of Christ, given in the twenty-fourth chapter of his gospel.

Some consider this chapter a mosaic of the sayings of Jesus, grouped by Matthew for a specific purpose. If so, it is impossible to separate the parts and assign them to their original setting with any degree of success. The prophetic parts of the chapter run out into the parables of warning and judgment, in the twenty-fifth chapter, in such a way as to make it appear, at least, that they all formed a continuous discourse. If the chapter is a mosaic, Matthew grouped these materials in a very skilful way for the purpose of presenting the teaching of Jesus on the judgments of God in the most impressive and emphatic manner. He begins with the divine judgment against rebellious Jerusalem, and the apostate Jewish nation. The setting



of the scene is in itself very imposing. It was the evening before the great paschal day. Jesus had denounced the heartlessness of "the Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites" in the most vehement and condemnatory language. (Matt. 23.) He closed His denunciation with this striking apostrophe:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matt. 23: 37-39.)

"And Jesus went out and departed from the temple." His disciples, deeply impressed by this strange language, and imbued with the national hope of a fully restored Davidic kingdom, could not think of their holy city and temple being left desolate. They came to Jesus and called His attention to the grandeur of the temple. It must have been a great shock to them when He replied: "See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." It must have been a quiet thoughtful walk out of the city and to the top of Olivet. These startling statements of Jesus would awaken new questions in the minds of the disciples and send mingled emotions surging through their souls. Having reached the height of the Mount of Olives on the Bethany road where the temple was in full view, and its splendid domes and spires of white and gold glistened in the setting sun, these worried disciples came to Jesus and asked Him, "Tell us when shall these things be? What

shall be the sign of thy coming and the end of the world." (Matt. 24: 1-3.)

The nature and scope of the answer to this threefold question must be largely determined by the circumstances and intention of what prompted it. While these disciples were confidently expecting the end of the age under the law when the Messiah entered upon His kingdom is very evident; but they had never for a moment associated the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple with the realization of the Messianic hope. Their confused condition of mind would naturally account for the form of their questions.

The ordinary English reader might take it for granted, that by "the end of the world" they meant the end of time, and the material universe. The Greek student, however, knows that the language used, *teo sunteleias tou aionos*, has no such meaning. It simply means the *completion of the age or dispensation*. There is no evidence that they had in mind the end of the gospel age, that is, the age under the Messiah. They were still expecting that age to begin, but they believed before this could be accomplished the kingdom of Israel must be restored. That would bring to an end the age under the law. It was doubtless this that they had in view. "When will these things be?" was their anxious inquiry. The "these things" were certainly the executing of the "woes upon the Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites," the desolation of Jerusalem, and the complete overthrow of the temple. Their knowledge of Old Testament imagery in the description of great providential happenings and national catastrophes, and particularly the statements of Jesus, would naturally lead them to associate this predicted catastrophe to their own capital city, with the com-

ing of Christ. They therefore, in true Jewish fashion, asked for a sign of His coming. We thus have the situation before us for a study of the dramatic answer of Jesus. The minds of these anxious disciples were not occupied with possible events in the far distant future. They were entirely under the spell of the announcement of pending disaster, and were very solicitous to know what was going to happen in their time.

Jesus in a very serious and guarded manner proceeded to enlighten them on "these things." He first warned them against deceptions and false prophets. He said, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, 'I am Christ,' and shall deceive many." (Matt. 24:5.) This warning is as pertinent and important in these days as it was then. Many rise up with fanciful theories and peculiar interpretations of these very scriptures, claiming special divine illumination, and thus impose upon the credulous. Even in the days of Jesus and His apostles, false Christs did arise and deceive multitudes. We read in the early part of the Acts of one Theudas who "boasted himself to be something." (Acts 5:36, 37.) Also of Judas of Galilee, "Who drew away much people," and of an Egyptian, who in the days of Paul, "led out into the wilderness four thousand men." (Acts 21:38.) The Apostle John in his first Epistle wrote, "Even now are there many anti-Christ, whereby we know that it is the last time." (1 John 2:18.)

Jesus also warned against hasty and precipitate conclusions, saying, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famine, and pesti-

lence, and earthquakes in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrow." (Matt. 24:6, 7.) Millennialists seize upon these predictions as indicating the present war; and as unquestionable proof that the end of the world is at hand, and base thereon fervid warnings and exhortations. In fact, these predictions have done duty in every war period of the Christian era. The would-be prophets have been so often confounded by history that one would think they would themselves begin to question the reliability of their interpretations. As a matter of fact, this is not a prediction of twentieth century wars at all, but of the disastrous wars that were pending at that time, and which resulted in the complete destruction of Jerusalem and the final breaking up of the Jewish nation. The record of these wars given by Josephus and others is an exact fulfilment of this prediction. Famines and pestilence abounded. The writer of the Acts mentioned a widespread and trying famine. "And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit, that there should be great dearth throughout all the world; which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar." (Acts 11. 28.)

Jesus furthermore told these anxious disciples of the hatred and persecution that would be heaped upon them personally, and upon all who would believe on Him. "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended and betray one another, and shall hate one another, and many false prophets shall arise and deceive many, and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that endureth to the end shall be saved." (Matt. 24:9-13.)

Any one at all familiar with the New Testament knows how frequently Jesus warned His disciples of the persecutions their mission would excite, and how quickly after Pentecost the persecutors got to work. Treachery and deception even entered the church and there was backsliding and apostasy. All this happened in the time of the apostles. In these matters, also, history has repeated itself. In every age more or less of this persecuting, vacillating spirit has prevailed. If there is backsliding and apostasy in these modern times, it only proves that there are still unstable and self-seeking people. It does not prove that the predictions of Jesus have regard primarily of the twentieth century.

At this point of the discourse, many meet an apparently insuperable difficulty to their acceptance of our interpretation, in the prediction, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (Matt. 24:14.) They say, "These predictions could not have meant the Jewish wars, and the trials and persecutions of the Apostolic age because the gospel has not yet been preached in all the world." It is true, of course, that even yet the vast majority of the world's population have not heard the gospel. But, after all, is this objection well founded? Are we justified in taking this, or any other scripture prophecy out of its connections, historical setting, and native atmosphere, and attempting to force it into modern conditions? The moral principles and lessons of the prophecies are eternal, but their immediate application and fulfilment are another thing. We are now concerned with the application and actual meaning of the predictions of Jesus.

The known geographical extent of the world in which Jesus and His apostles lived was very much more limited than the world in which we live. To them, the world was all contained within the boundaries of the Roman Empire. The language of Jesus would be fully satisfied if the gospel were preached throughout the countries under the rule of the Cæsars. The Greek word rendered *world* is *oikoumene*, derived from *oikos*, a house, a home. It was the word used by the Greeks to describe their homeland, as distinguished from the countries beyond its borders. Later it was applied to the Roman Empire, which had conquered and absorbed the land of the Greeks. It was not until the church began to call the Ecumenical councils, formulate its creeds, and issue its universal decrees, that the meaning was extended to "the habitable globe."

In the New Testament, it meant the world as then known, which was the Roman Empire. It was strictly in this sense that Luke used it. He wrote, "And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world (*oikoumenen*) should be taxed." (Luke 2:1.)

Cæsar Augustus was Emperor of Rome. It is very evident that his power to tax would be confined to his own empire. We are, therefore, forced to the conclusion, that in this case the phrase, "all the world," was restricted to the *homeland* of the Romans, or to "our own country," which is the literal and primary meaning of *oikoumene*.

"This gospel of the kingdom was preached in *all the world* (*en ole te oikoumene*) for a testimony to all the Gentiles" (*eio martyrion pasan tois ethnesin*). *Ethnon*, of which *ethnesin* is pl. dative, rendered "nations," in this text, is the one word used for Gen-

tiles throughout the New Testament. In a few passages, the proper name *Hellenes*, Greeks, is rendered *Gentiles*, but this word is never used by the synoptic writers, for Gentiles, or nations. In the New Testament, *nations* and *Gentiles* are synonymous. Therefore, we are only giving the natural and consistent meaning when we translate, "For a testimony to all the Gentiles."

It is both interesting and illuminating to study the extension and development of the kingdom under apostolic preaching. On the day of Pentecost, there were at Jerusalem, celebrating the feast, representatives of every part of the Roman Empire, of "all the world," and they all heard the gospel of the kingdom preached in their own tongues (Acts 2:9-11) and three thousand were converted and baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. (Acts 2:38.) We might stop here and say with all truthfulness the prediction is fulfilled, but this was only the beginning of the work. How many of these Pentecostal converts became witnesses of the gospel in their distant home town, we have no way of knowing. But the converted Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:29-39) carried the glad tidings of the kingdom into Africa. Paul mentions going to Spain (Rom. 15:28), and it is claimed he visited the British Isles and preached the gospel. Some of the early disciples went to Babylon (1 Pet. 5:13) and farther east. It is also claimed that evidences are found in China of Christian missionary work there by Barnabas, the companion of Paul. Luke records that at the time of Stephen's martyrdom, a great persecution arose against the church and scattered the disciples. And "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the gospel." (Acts 8:1-4.) Paul in his epistle to the Romans says, "Yes

verily, their sound went into all the earth (*pasan te ge*) and their words unto the ends of the world" (*eis perata teo oikoumenes*). (Romans 10:18.) When writing to the Colossians, Paul gave thanks that the gospel had come unto them "even as also in all the world" (*en panti to kosmo*). (Col. 1:3-6.) Here we have a different word for world, *kosmos*, which has a wider meaning than the word used by Matthew. As Paul proceeded to set forth the superlative principles of the gospel, he exhorted the Colossians "not to be moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature under heaven." (Col. 1:23.) Or, as the Revised Version gives it, "In all creation under heaven." This is a "Hebraism for the whole human race, and particularly referring to the two grand divisions of mankind" (Dr. A. Clark's *Commentary*): the Jews and the Gentiles. Thus the Apostles were obedient to the great commission and went "into all the world, and preached the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15.) Previously to the destruction of Jerusalem, the gospel was not only preached in lesser Asia and Greece and Italy, the greatest theatres of the world, but was likewise propagated as far north as Scythia, as far south as Ethiopia, as far east as Parthia and India, and as far west as Spain and Britain." (Dr. A. Clark on Matt. 24:14.)

The disciples had asked for a sign by which they might know the time of "these things" and of His coming. (Matt. 24:3.) This first sign was worked out by them. Another sign by which they might know that the end had come, was, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel



the Prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand), then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains." (Matt. 24:15, 16.)

Daniel's predictions of "the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place" are found in the ninth, eleventh, and twelfth chapters of his prophecy. Various schemes of computing the days and weeks of Daniel have been adopted to make them work out the time of the second coming of Christ. The most notable fact about these schemes of reckoning is the general and particular manner in which they have been disproved by the correcting hand of the passing years. This should be sufficient to put on guard all sincere seekers after truth.

The most important feature of this prophecy is not the times indicated but the desolating abomination substituted for the daily sacrifice. (Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11.) "Reams of conjecture and dubious history and imaginative chronology have been expended upon the effort to give any interpretation of these precise data which can pretend to the dignity of firm and scientific exegesis." (Expositor's Bible, p. 431.) As we now study prophecy and its fulfilment, we must take into consideration the unquestionable facts of history. Even in this we must not forget that the dominating factor is not the historical events but the moral principles and spiritual forces that influence and govern the situation. The primary function of the prophets was not to foretell future events or disclose the detailed plans of God for the government of the world, but to teach their own generation the divine will and the operations of infinite mercy and justice. Therefore, they dealt with present conditions and prospects in the light

of divine revelation, and laid down eternal moral principles that would determine future developments. That is, the moral conditions that made for weal or woe in the nation at the time the prophecies were spoken, will make for weal or woe in any and every nation to the end of the ages. Moral principles with their penalties and blessings are inflexible and irrevocable; they never vary in their results. The appeal of Moses in his farewell to Israel is the ultimatum of the unchanging God that rings clearly and distinctly down through the ages of all time. (Deu. 30:15-20.) In thus declaring the law of the Lord they did penetrate the veil of the future and foretell coming events. As we have noticed above, some of these predictions have more than a single fulfilment in the repetitions of history. For instance, this prophecy of Daniel concerning the cutting off of the daily sacrifice, and the "abomination that makes desolate standing in the place where it ought not" was literally fulfilled by the defilement of the temple under Antiochus Epiphanes. The account of the overthrow of Jerusalem and the atrocities of this blasphemous king of Syria are graphically described in the books of the Maccabees. In this account of the actual events, the language of Daniel is used. "Now the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred and forty and fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and built idol altars throughout Judea on every side: and burnt incense at the doors of their houses and in the streets." (1 Maccabees 1:54, 55.)

The people of those times, about B.C. 170, considered this profanation of the temple and the determined effort of Antiochus Epiphanes to utterly destroy the Jewish religion, an exact fulfilment of the prophecy of Daniel. It was again fulfilled when the Roman

legions under T. Flavius Vespasianus and Titus surrounded Jerusalem in the year 70 A.D. and, true to the prediction of Jesus, laid her walls even with the ground, and did not leave one stone of the temple upon another. The "abomination of desolation standing in the holy place" was the pagan Roman ensign that desecrated the sanctuary, and the pagan orgies held in the sacred courts. This was the sign of the end from which the disciples were to take warning and flee to the mountains. The attempt of millennialists to picture a fanciful scene in the still unknown future when the "Abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel will stand in the holy place in Jerusalem as a sign of the second coming of Jesus to set up a millennial kingdom, is not only unwarranted by the text, but perverts the teaching of Jesus and sets aside the known facts of history. This sign given by Jesus was not to an unknown generation that would live on the earth two or more thousand years after His time, but to those disciples that had questioned Him about "these things" and were hanging on His every word. It was to them He gave the warning, "Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." History tells us that at this siege by the Romans, a very remarkable and providential thing happened. After the siege had lasted for a considerable time, and conditions in the city were becoming unendurable, Emperor Nero died, and Vespasianus, the general conducting the siege, hastened to Rome to personally push his aspirations as successor to the imperial throne; his son Titus came to complete the work and force Jerusalem into subjection. While Titus was approaching with his army, Governor Cestius Gallus raised the siege and gave the city a few days' respite. The disciples of Jesus, remembering the warning of

their Lord, improved this opportunity to escape from the beleaguered city, and fled in a body for safety to the village of Pella, and other places beyond the Jordan. (Dr. Smith's *New Testament History*, p. 129.) Thus, this destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans fulfilled the prophecies of Jesus in every detail, and the Holy City and Temple have never been restored.

The specific cautions against deception by pretended Christs are especially set to the times of the apostles and immediately following, but they are also applicable to all times. They serve as a caution in our day against the religious pretenders who dangle before a credulous people high pretensions of special divine illumination by which they are able to tell what will be hereafter, and outline a detailed eschatological program that the infinite God must follow.

Much stress is laid upon the predictions of "the coming of the Son of Man," as proof that Jesus is predicting His second coming, to set up His millennial kingdom. There may be involved in this series of predictions an intimation of the final coming of Jesus to judgment; but undoubtedly the immediate *coming* that Jesus was urging, was in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem and the ending of the Mosaic polity.

The millennialists cite the passages, "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. 24:27), and also "Then shall appear also the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: then shall the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Matt. 24:30.) This they urge must be a personal, bodily coming, or *parousia* of Jesus, which was not at all realized at the destruction of Je-

rusalem. This claim calls for a very careful analysis of these passages and their connections.

A detailed examination of the figures and predictions of these passages in the light of parallel scriptures, which are unmistakable in their meaning and application, is the surest way to determine the meaning of Jesus. This the millennialists fail to do. Instead, they press upon the language a fanciful meaning, suiting their accepted theory, and then fill in the details of an elaborate system of eschatological happenings beyond anything that is revealed.

The question of first importance is, Does the prediction of the coming of the Son of Man in these passages refer exclusively, or even remotely, to the so-called second coming of Jesus to set up a millennial kingdom? Or to state it a little differently, Did these disciples to whom Jesus was so seriously and graphically disclosing the approaching destruction of Jerusalem understand Him to be predicting a personal return to earth that had nothing to do with that catastrophe, and was so many thousand years in the future that it could have no possible point of contact with their earthly experience and work? The very fact that Matthew so closely connects these statements with the predicted destruction of Jerusalem, is evidence that the disciples understood "the coming, or *parousia*, of the Son of Man" in some way to coincide with that great catastrophe. The statement, "As the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth unto the west: so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. 24:27), is figurative and must be interpreted in the light of Bible imagery. Dr. Adam Clark's *Commentary* says:

It is worthy of remark that our Lord in the most particu-

lar manner points out the very march of the Roman Army. They entered Judea from the *east*, and carried on their conquest westward, as if not only the extensiveness of the ruin, but the very route which the army would take, were intended in the comparison of *the lightning issuing from the east and shining to the west*.

To millennialist interpreters, it may seem very sacrilegious to suggest that the Son of Man came with the Roman Army to besiege Jerusalem, but the commentator, Dr. Adam Clark, was one of the most reverent and devout commentators. Furthermore, in the long list of premillennialist preachers and commentators given in the report of the premillennial convention held in Chicago in 1914, Dr. Clark is listed as a premillenarian, which should qualify him for at least a hearing as an orthodox interpreter of scripture.

They say that "the coming of the Son of Man is a *parousia*, a real presence." But in the Old Testament, national judgments and the agency of destruction are frequently described as "the presence of the Lord." Therefore, this explanation has the further merit of being in harmony with Jewish prophecies and apocalyptic writings generally. The destruction of Israel's enemies in the wilderness journey is ascribed to the presence of the Lord Jehovah in these strong terms: "The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel." (Psa. 68:8.) Again, "His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth." (Psa. 97:4, 5.)

Isaiah's prediction of the destruction of Egypt is in language almost identical with this prediction of

Jesus. "Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come to Egypt." (Isa. 19:1.) Jeremiah's prediction of the downfall of Judah and Jerusalem ascribes the destruction to the presence of the Lord, when the armies of Nebuchadnezzar were the agency. He says, "I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger." (Jer. 4:26.)

"But," we are reminded, "there is the great tribulation, such as the world never saw." The premillennial program divides the time between the coming of Christ and the real establishment of the millennial kingdom into the Rapture and the Revelation, with several subdivisions according to the special illumination of the individual writer, and fitted into the scheme between the church and the millennial kingdom is the tribulation of the saints. This is what they usually mean when they speak of "the tribulation." They turn to the tribulation predicted by Jesus to prove their program, and assert with an air of triumph that "there never has been a tribulation to fulfil these prophecies." But there is such a very strained appearance about this program that it hardly seems natural or even spiritual. It makes God appear such an eccentric, arbitrary, and autocratic sovereign that it is difficult to see how any intelligent person could love and worship such a freak. The tribulation of this passage is so linked up with the predicted destruction of the Holy City that it cannot be dissociated from it by any legitimate rules of exegesis. In the warning for the disciples to flee from the city when they saw the unmistakable signs of its doom, the great reason for the urgency and haste was, "For then shall there be great tribulation, such as was not

since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." (Matt. 24:21.) Dr. A. Clark says, "No history can furnish us with a parallel to the calamities and miseries of the Jews; rapine, murder, famine and pestilence *within*; fire, and sword and all the horrors of war *without*. Our Lord wept (Luke 19:41-44) at the foresight of these calamities; and it is almost impossible for any humane person to read the relation of them by Josephus without weeping also."

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be darkened." (Matt. 24:29.) These startling scenes follow immediately after the foregoing catastrophes and tribulations, and therefore must form a part of the calamities. The imagery of these passages is doubtless drawn from the Old Testament prophecies. Isaiah describes the pending destruction of Babylon in the same startling figures, only with a little more embellishment.

Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore, shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: and they shall be afraid; pangs and sorrow shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth; they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames. Behold the day of the Lord cometh; cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellation thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. (Isa. 13:6-10.)

Here is the tribulation; the darkened sun, the hidden moon, and the fall of the stars, and yet the prophet



was merely predicting the overthrow and destruction of Babylon, whose king would first overthrow Jerusalem and destroy the Holy Temple. If Isaiah was justified in making such use of this poetic imagery, then Jesus was perfectly justified in applying it to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. But these are not solitary cases. Isaiah uses the same figures in the predicted destruction of Egypt. (Isa. 19:1.) Ezekiel also prophesies against Egypt, saying, "And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land." (Ezek. 32:7, 8.) When Daniel foretold the destruction of Jerusalem by Antiochus Epiphanes, "the little horn that waxed exceeding great," he said, "It waxed great even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them." (Dan. 8:10.) No one could for a moment think that any king of earth could cast down either the "hosts of heaven" or the stars to the earth and stamp upon them. There is no reason to think that the darkening of the sun and moon and the falling of the stars in the picturesque language of Jesus meant any more than did the figures of the major prophets.

There is one other prediction foretelling these disturbances of the heavenly bodies, which sheds light upon our subject, because its application is so definitely made under apostolic preaching. The Lord by the mouth of the prophet Joel said:

And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters

shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and the handmaidens in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call. (Joel, 2: 28-32.)

We pause to inquire diligently the meaning. What is this great and notable day of the Lord that will so convulse nature, and create these startling wonders in earth and heaven? We are led to Luke's account of the Day of Pentecost when "the promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4) was fulfilled and the waiting, praying disciples were baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Some of the people in their amazement questioned the meaning of this miraculous demonstration of divine power. Those who felt that they must justify the crucifixion of the Master of these devout disciples, and discredit the purity and sincerity of their testimony of the reality and power of the resurrection of Jesus, charged them with drunkenness. "But Peter standing up with the eleven" repudiated the accusation, and boldly declared, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, and it shall come to pass in the last days saith God, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh." (Acts 2: 1-21.) He quoted in full the passage from Joel, detailing the great exertions of divine power, and its startling effects upon heaven and earth, even to the darkened sun, the bloody moon, and the pillars of fire and smoke. There is no intimation that on the day of Pentecost or connected

therewith the physical heavens were so disturbed or that this physical earth was so enveloped in fire and smoke. We are told that at the crucifixion of Jesus seven weeks before, the sun was darkened for the space of three hours and there was a great earthquake, but there is no evidence that Peter was referring to these events. Even these disturbances of nature did not come up to the startling commotions of this "great and notable day of the Lord." This prophetic imagery must have a much more religious significance than is indicated by any physical disturbances of the heavenly bodies. The supreme event of this "notable day of the Lord" was the outpouring of God's spirit upon the praying disciples and the first preaching of the full gospel of salvation from sin through the crucified, risen, and exalted Jesus of Nazareth. The outstanding promises of the prophecy of Joel and its Pentecostal fulfilment are "The pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh, the prophesying of the sons and daughters of Israel," and the assurance that "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." This is purely religious. It is certainly reasonable to expect that the minor details, such as the darkening of the sun and moon, will agree with the major spiritual demonstrations.

When we group these various prophecies and their fulfilment, we are forced to conclude that the language is purely figurative, and must have a figurative explanation. We get the key from the apocalyptic writings and the Rabbinical teaching of the Jews, in which the religion is called the heavens, and the civil government the earth; also the religious light of the nation is represented by the sun, the civil authority by the moon, and the teachers and administrators or judges, the

stars. In all the great national catastrophes predicted, both the civil government and the religion of the conquered nation were supplanted by the religion and government of the conquerors. It was not until the Roman Empire asserted its rule over Asia, that the people were free to practise their national religion without being compelled to subscribe to the religion of their overlords. In the inauguration of Christianity and the preaching of salvation by Jesus, there was commenced a religious revolution that would darken the sun not only of the pagan religions but also of Judaism, and the civil governments would be overthrown. The establishment of the kingdom of heaven on the earth would set at naught the religious doctors and civil judges who set themselves against Jesus of Nazareth. Thus these figurative representations of the eclipses of the sun and moon on the day of Pentecost were evidently intended to point out the fall of the civil and ecclesiastical states of Judea.

With these facts before us, we return to our Lord's prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, and conclude that He was not describing convulsions and eclipses of the physical heavens and earth, but the overthrow of the civil and religious power of Judaism. The comment of Dr. Adam Clark supports this view. He says, "Commentators generally understand this, and what follows, of the end of the world and Christ's coming to judgment; but the word *immediately* shows that our Lord is not speaking of any *distant* event, but of something immediately consequent on calamities already predicted: and that must be the destruction of Jerusalem." He then quotes the learned Lightfoot, "The Jewish heaven shall perish, and the sun and moon of its glory and happiness shall be darkened — brought

to nothing. The *sun* is the religion of the *church*; the *moon* is the government of the *state*; and the *stars* are the judges and doctors of both."

How completely this was carried out in the destruction of Jerusalem is familiar to every student of history. The temple with all its religious services, offerings and sacrifices was destroyed, and the Jewish hierarchy and Mosaic polity were ended, which marked "the end of the world," or the completion of the age under the law.

The succeeding passages present serious difficulties to the ordinary reader. The millennialist interpreters work these passages industriously to prove their theories. The statements are, "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, and from one end of heaven to the other." (Matt. 24: 30, 31.)

We are still dealing with the prophetic figures of the Old Testament and the poetical imagery of apocalypse. "All the tribes of the earth" is clearly a Hebraism for all the Jews. It does not mean "all the nations of the earth." The original language is, *pasa ai phylai tes ges*, literally, "all the tribes of the land." *O ge, the land*, was the common idiom for the land of Israel, "the tribes of the land" were the tribes of Israel. It is true that *O ge* in Greek means *the earth* in general, but it is also used in a restricted sense for *the land*, and is frequently used to mean a small section. The expression before us has its counterpart in the prophecy of Zechariah. "In that day there shall be a great

mourning in Jerusalem, . . . and the land shall mourn every family apart." (Zech. 12:11, 12.) *The land* here certainly means *the land of Israel*. "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven." "The plain meaning of this is, that the destruction of Jerusalem will be such a remarkable instance of divine vengeance, such a signal manifestation of Christ's power and glory, that all *the Jewish tribes* shall mourn, and many will, in consequence of this manifestation of God, be led to acknowledge Christ and his religion." (Dr. A. Clark's *Commentary*.)

"They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Our thought is here turned back to Daniel's vision of the four beasts that came out of the troubled sea, and the one "like unto the Son of Man who came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days" (Dan. 7: 13), when the judgment was set and the books were opened.

Who that is guided by the *mere words* would doubt that this is a description of the final judgment? And yet nothing is clearer than that it is *not*, but a description of a vast temporal judgment, upon organized bodies of men, for their incurable hostility to the kingdom of God on earth. . . . Comparing this with our Lord's words, He seems to us by "the Son of man coming in the clouds with power and great glory," to mean, that when judicial vengeance shall once have been executed upon Jerusalem, and the ground thus cleared for the unobstructed establishment of His own kingdom, His true regal claims shall be visibly and gloriously asserted and manifested. See on Luke 9: 28 in which nearly the same language is employed, and where it can hardly be understood of anything else than *the full establishment of the kingdom of Christ on the destruction of Jerusalem*. (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, *Commentary*, Mark 13: 26.)

The figure of the Lord coming in the clouds of heaven was very familiar to the Jews, who would not be so grievously misled by it, as are many modern Christians. The Lord frequently appeared "unto Israel in a cloud." (Ex. 14:19, 20, and 24:15-18.) The psalmist sang, "The Lord rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, He did fly upon the wings of the wind . . . and brightness was before Him and thick clouds passed . . . and round about Him were thick clouds of the skies." (Psalm 18:10-12.) This was David's poetic rejoicing and thanksgiving with which he celebrated his signal victory over the Philistines. The prophecy of Egypt's destruction is, "Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud and shall come to Egypt: and the idols shall be moved at His presence." (Isa. 19:1.) This language has a striking similarity to Jesus' prediction of the *parousia* in the clouds of heaven. One is therefore in perfect harmony with the poetical and prophetical language of the Scriptures when he accepts the prediction of Jesus as a figurative description of a great national catastrophe,— a political and religious revolution connected with the destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the temple.

But, we are asked, in great surprise, "What about the angels sent forth with a great sound of a trumpet to gather the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other?" (Matt. 24:31.) This, they urge, is surely the coming of the angels with the trumpet of God at the last day. While, like all prophecies, this may have a double meaning, one more immediate, dealing with present conditions and pending events; and one more remote reaching into the indefinite future; we are now concerned as were the anxious disciples, with its immediate meaning and application. Every

Greek student is fully aware that the word *angel*, Greek, *angelos*, simply means a messenger of any kind. As used in the New Testament it is not necessarily a heavenly or divine messenger. Paul called his troublesome thorn in the flesh an angel of Satan, *Angelos Satan*. (2 Cor. 12:7.) James calls the spies whom Rahab hid by faith, the angels, *tous angelous*. (James 2:25.) Malachi's prediction of John the Baptist as quoted by Jesus is, "Behold I send my angel (*ton angelon mou*) before my face." (Mal. 3:1; Matt. 11:12; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:27.) Luke also calls the disciples of John angels, saying, "And when the angels (*angelon*) of John departed." (Luke 7:24.) The disciples of Jesus were also called angels. "Jesus steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent His angels (*angelous*) before His face." (Luke 9:51, 52.) It is, therefore, perfectly legitimate to take *angels* in our passage to mean the disciples of Jesus who were sent into all the world to make disciples of all nations. The preaching of the gospel was the trumpet call to repentance and peace with God. It was by this divine summons that the elect from the four winds were gathered into the kingdom of heaven. How like the appeal of Isaiah, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression and the house of Jacob their sins." (Isa. 58:1.) Thus the meaning of our text would be, "He shall send His angels or messengers, His apostles and their successors in the ministry, with a *great sounding trumpet*, the earnest, affectionate call of the gospel of peace, life, and salvation." (Dr. A. Clark's *Commentary*.) This was done before the destruction of Jerusalem, and converts were gathered into the kingdom of God from the four winds of heaven. There is, there-



fore, no reason why this passage should not be interpreted in harmony with all that precedes it in this wonderful prediction. These events were to be "immediately after the tribulation of those days," which forbids their postponement for thousands of years. The original word *eultheos*, from *eulthus*, means *straightway, forthwith, at once*; and no amount of sophistry can stretch it to mean events which are yet in the unknown future. On the other hand, all prophetic language and the history of the times point to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans as the great judgment predicted.

This interpretation receives more decisive confirmation from the statement, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass until all these things be fulfilled." (Matt. 24:34.) The millennialists endeavor to dispose of this by arguing that "*generation* means *race*," and the Jewish race has not passed away but has been providentially preserved as a distinct people throughout the passing centuries, and, therefore, this passage is proof that these predictions are yet unfulfilled. This, however, is a frail thread upon which to hang such a ponderous theory as the millennial reign. The prediction is, "This generation shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled." If *generation* be taken in this wider sense, it would not prove that "these things" were not the destruction of Jerusalem with all the accompanying calamities. The statement is not that the Jewish race will pass away when "all these things are fulfilled." Whatever may, or may not, be the future of the Jewish race, there are some things that are placed beyond the limits of speculation, and one of them is that the kingdom of God is not built upon racial lines. "God is no respecter of persons,

but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him." (Acts 10:34, 35.)

Again, we learn from history that "all these things" were fulfilled in the time of the generation living when Jesus uttered these prophecies from Mount Olivet. Finally, *generation* (Greek *genea*) meant to those disciples what it means to us, the span of human life. "This generation" meant the people then living. If a more extended meaning had been intended, certainly a qualifying adjective indicating the fact would have been used. The demonstrative *this* confines the application to the people then living. Just before leaving the temple on that momentous day, Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation." (Matt. 23:26.) He was pronouncing immediate judgment upon the "Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites." If He had meant that these woes would come upon the descendants of these people thousands of years hence, what force would His denunciations have for those who were listening? But He fixed the application to the people He was addressing by His apostrophe, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," and foretold its utter destruction which took place only forty years afterward. On a previous occasion, Jesus said to His disciples, "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here that shall not see death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." (Matt. 16:28; Mark 9:1; Lke 9:27.) This statement presents very peculiar difficulties to the millennial interpreters. If "the coming of the Son of Man in His kingdom" is still future, how could Jesus say "there are some standing here who shall not see death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom"?

One of the outstanding premillennial authorities says:

We believe the word *till* more than intimates that "some" should taste of death, and that, therefore, natural death, or separation of body and soul, is meant. But now let us mark well what the some standing there were to see, and then let us go up the Mount of Transfiguration, and gaze through the favored eyes of Peter, James, and John upon the scene which is recorded immediately after the passage we are considering. . . . We cannot tell how much of the future they saw in that enraptured hour, but doubtless they had a specific vision of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in His kingdom and glory. (*Jesus Is Coming*, W. E. B., page 139.)

This is a very significant admission that it was possible for those standing with Jesus to see "the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." If they saw it on the Mount of Transfiguration, they might also have seen a fuller manifestation on the Day of Pentecost when the power and glory of the kingdom were revealed in the salvation of thousands; and further when the Gentiles were received into the kingdom on an equality with the Jews, but more especially in the portents and calamities accompanying the destruction of Jerusalem, and the passing away of the Jewish hierarchy and temple worship. In any case, these great events were to come to pass within the time of people then living who would see the fulfilment and be living witnesses of these things.

The parabolic illustrations which conclude the address and urge the necessity of fidelity and persistent watchfulness are of a general character and apply with equal force to the imminent calamity of the Jewish nation and church, the final judgment, or the approach of death unto all men. But we confidently affirm that having carefully examined these predictions, we fail to find one word to indicate the bodily coming again of

Jesus to rule the world in person for a thousand years; but, on the contrary, that Jesus was even then pronouncing judgment upon the faithless Jewish nation and predicting its utter destruction.

#### 4. *The Testimony of Revelation*

The Book of Revelation is a happy hunting ground for all sorts of eschatological theories. It is a strange congeries of Hebrew apocalyptic imagery that is quite foreign to our modern mode of thought. Some take it as an outline of the leading political and religious events of the world from the beginning of the Christian era to the end of time. But while they claim to be able to decipher this outline, and show what predictions have been fulfilled, and exactly what will happen in the future, it is difficult to find two interpreters of outstanding reputation who agree upon the detailed meaning of the book. The most reasonable view of Revelation is that it deals with the prevailing conditions and pending disasters of the times in which the writer was living. In common with all other parts of the Bible, it sets forth the moral and religious principles and forces in their great conflict with evil, and ascribes ultimate and absolute victory unto Christ Jesus, and all who trust in Him as Lord and Saviour. Thus it treats of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come; but the great calamities foretold were pending when the Revelation was given.

The prologue of the book is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him to shew unto His servants the things which must *shortly* come to pass." (Rev. 1:1.) It is, therefore, not a revelation of things that are to come to pass in the far distant future, but that are to come to pass immediately. The

word translated *shortly* is *en tachei*, *quickly*, *right away*. Scenes were even then opening upon the people to whom the apostles were writing. Lest there might be a mistake regarding the immediateness of the fulfilment of these predictions, John puts his warning of near danger in the form of a blessing upon those who read and obey the precepts written, saying, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein: for the time is at hand." (Rev. 1:3.) Thus the closing warning of the prologue uses a different word to impress upon those who read and those who hear the words of this prophecy, that the time was right upon them, and therefore it was imperative for them "to keep the things that are written in it." The word is from *engizo*, and means *close at hand*, *hard by*. This is the word used both by John the Baptist and Jesus in their first announcement of the gospel message to urge the imperative reason for repentance, saying, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," *engiken*; literally, *has drawn near*. (Matt. 3:2; 4:17.) Millennialists experience much difficulty in explaining away this unquestionable meaning. They say that, although nearly two thousand years have passed and the millennial kingdom has not come, yet the disciples were to expect it to come in their day, every generation since has been called upon to live in the expectation of the immediate coming of Christ, and therefore we today are to take it for granted that the time is right on us, and we should momentarily expect the coming of the Lord. This, however, is simply trifling with language to make it suit the exigencies of a theory exploded long ago by the passing of time. It is most erroneous to talk of an event being "at hand"

*engiken*, nearly two thousand years ago, and still remaining in the indefinite and unknown future. One millennialist writer impressed with the strain this theory puts upon intelligence attempts to find another way out of the difficulty. He says, "The kingdom did come 'nigh' when Christ came, and had they received Him, it would have been manifested, but now it is in abeyance, or waiting till He comes again." Apparently conscious of the fact that this will not meet the demands of his theory of a millennial kingdom, he appends this explanation, "However the Greek word *engizo* which is translated *at hand* in Matt. 3:2 and 4:17, and is *come nigh* in Luke 10:9-11, does not necessarily mean immediately near. For we find the same word used in Rom. 13:12. 'The day is at hand,' and in Heb. 10:25 as 'ye see the day approaching,' and in James 5:8, 'The coming of the Lord draweth nigh,' and in 1 Pet. 4:7, 'The end of all things is at hand,' each of which passages are yet unfulfilled.

"So we see that the word *engizo* (is at hand) covers a period of more than 1800 years, and reaches unto the second coming of Christ." (*Jesus is Coming*, W. E. B., page 88.)

But does this author's quotations confirm his definition of the word? When the Apostles used this word did they think that the time before them was thousands of years distant? Is not the very fact that they said "the time is at hand" (*engus, engizo*) proof positive that they expected it to be fulfilled within their lifetime?

The clear evidence is that to the Apostles the word *engizo* meant the time was right near, and the day would be realized by them.

John claimed to have received a definite and full

revelation from the glorified Jesus, which he was to "write in a book, and send to the seven churches which are in Asia." (Rev. 1:11.) Therefore, the Revelation was for a specific purpose and a special time, to a group of churches that were facing peculiar trials and difficulties. This great congeries of startling events depicted in the most marvellous imagery of the Jewish apocalyptic writings were "shortly to come to pass." Not only does the book open with the repeated warnings of the immediate approach of the things written, but it closes with the same warnings. In the last chapter we read, "These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God sent His angels to show unto His servants the things that *must shortly be done.*" (Rev. 22:6.) And again, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: *for the time is at hand.*" (Rev. 22:10.) And finally, "He which testifieth these things saith surely, *I come quickly.*" (Rev. 22:20.) Greek *tachus*, *with speed, right away.* This language certainly cannot mean, "Surely I come several thousand years hence." It is very evident that the revelation depicts pending catastrophes.

The word revelation is in harmony with this interpretation, for it means taking away the veil, and making known. It is here the revelation given by Jesus to His apostle to show the things that *must shortly come to pass.* It is clear, therefore, at the very beginning that John is waiting, not for things in the remote future, but what was then happening, and what he expected would very soon happen to the people of that time. There is no justification for the attempt so often made to apply the details of the vision in this book to the events of modern times. (Prof. J. F. McLaughlin, Victoria University, Toronto, Ont., in *The Bible Class Monthly*, Dec., 1916.)

The exact explanation of all the events portrayed in

the imagery of this book is very difficult to obtain.<sup>1</sup> There are many divergent opinions even in regard to the time when this revelation was given. The range of time is between 69 A. D. and 96 A. D. If the later dates are accepted, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the complete abolition of the Mosaic polity were accomplished facts, and do not come within the purview of these visions. It is very evident, however, that they are concerned primarily and immediately with the great persecutions and religious disturbances of the times, and the political upheavals in the nations of the world.

Many of the most renowned Biblical scholars, both ancient and modern, fix the date of John's banishment to Patmos at about 69 A. D. in the midst of the fearful persecution of the Christians by the perfidious Emperor Nero. The inscription to the Syriac Version, published in the London Polyglot Bible, reads: "The Revelation which God gave John the Evangelist, in the Isles of Patmos, to which he was banished by Nero-Cæsar." This would place the Revelation just before the destruction of Jerusalem, or while the Roman Legions were gathering for the great siege. Therefore, "the time is at hand," would refer to this time of catastrophe and judgment. "The things that must shortly be done," would be the destruction of the Holy City and its temple, with the complete abolition of the Jewish sacrifices and the Mosaic economy. Also, the downfall of that Babylon of iniquity and persecutor of the saints, the Roman Empire, that was responsible for the horrors connected with the siege of Jerusalem.

The heavens and the earth were passing away, and a new heaven and a new earth were taking their place.

There are internal evidences that favor this early

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter, *The Millennial Reign*.



date and indicate that the great upheaval immediately before John was the destruction of Jerusalem and the final breaking up of the Jewish nation and church. The first fact that presses upon us is that John uses practically the same figures and expressions Jesus used in His prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem. Take, for instance, this passage in the first chapter: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." (Rev. 1:7.) In our examination of the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, we showed the Biblical meaning of the expression, "coming with the clouds." It is the poetical form to describe the divine presence in great manifestations of supernatural power. The phrase, "All kindreds of the earth," generally taken to mean, "all the people of this world," is *pasai ai phulai tes ges* — the same phrase as used in Matthew 24:30, and is literally "all the tribes of the land," the common way of designating all the Jews or tribes of Israel. The destruction of their capital city and their beloved temple was a great cause of mourning among all the Jews. At the time of this great catastrophe there were still living some of those who consented to the crucifixion of Jesus, and who saw the wonderful phenomena that is reported by Josephus and others in connection with the Roman siege.

The revelations made by opening the seals evidently concerned both the destruction of Jerusalem and the downfall of the Roman Empire. (Chap. 6.) The cry of the waiting souls under the altar of the fifth seal is against the persecuting Jews. (Verses 9, 10.) "They that dwell on the earth," is *ton katoikounton epi tes ges*, literally, "those that dwell in the land"—

a familiar Hebraism for the Jews of Palestine. Dr. Adam Clark observed:

If this book was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, as is most likely, then this destruction is that which was to fall upon the Jews; and the *little time or season* was that which elapsed between their martyrdom, or the date of this book and the final destruction of Jerusalem under the Romans.

The opening of the sixth seal revealed the overthrow of the Roman Empire and the destruction of its pagan religion and government.

And the sun became as black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth . . . and the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together . . . and the kings of the mighty men, and every bondman and every free man hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains. (Verses 12-15.)

The figures of this imposing passage have become familiar to us in our study of the Old Testament prophecies and the predicted fall of Jerusalem. They do not indicate a disturbance of the physical heavenly bodies, but the overthrow of national religions and governments in the great political upheavals of the world. Here they are taken by eminent scholars to indicate primarily the collapse of the religious and civil systems of Imperial Rome.

Dr. Adam Clark, after commenting on this chapter, verse by verse, in line with this conception, appends this illuminating summary, containing an extended quotation from the great Dr. Dodd. He says:

Though I do not pretend to say that my remarks on this

chapter point out its true significance, yet I find others have applied it in the same way. *Dr. Dodd* observes that the fall of Babylon, Idumea, Judah, Egypt, and Jerusalem has been described by the prophets in language equally pompous, figurative, and strong. See Isa. 13:10, 34:4 concerning Babylon and Idumea; Jer. 4:23, 24 concerning Judah; Ezek. 32:7 concerning Egypt; Joel 2:10, 31 concerning Jerusalem; our Lord Himself, Matt. 24:29, concerning the same city. "Now," says he, "it is certain that the fall of any of these cities or kingdoms was not of greater concern or consequence to the world, nor more deserving to be described in pompous figures than the fall of the *pagan Roman Empire*, when the great lights of the heathen world, the *sun, moon and stars*, the powers civil and ecclesiastical, were all eclipsed and obscured, the heathen emperors and Cæsars were slain, the heathen priests and augurs were extirpated, the heathen officers and magistrates were removed, the temples were demolished, and their revenues were devoted to better uses. It is customary with the prophets, after they have described a thing in the most symbolical and figurative manner, to represent the same again in plainer language, and the same method is observed here, ver. 15, 16, 17: *And the kings of the earth*, etc. That is, Maximin, Galerius, Maxentius, Licinius, etc., with all their adherents and followers, were so routed and dispersed that *they hid themselves in dens*, — expressions used to denote the utmost terror and confusion. This is, therefore, a triumph of Christ over His heathen enemies, and a triumph after a severe punishment: so that the time and all the circumstances, as well as the series and order of the prophecy, agree perfectly with this interpretation. *Galerius, Maximin, and Licinius*, made even a public confession of their guilt, recalled their decrees and edicts against Christians, and acknowledged the just judgments of Christ in their own destruction. (*Dr. A. Clark's Commentary, Rev. 6.*)

The Rev. Dr. Milligan, in his excellent exposition of the Book of Revelation, sees in this sixth seal not only the predicted downfall of pagan Rome, but the over-

throw of all evil systems that set themselves against the Lord and His anointed. Thus the eternal principles of the government of God are seen in their irrevocable operation against all evil, and for the promotion of all good. We cannot do better than give in full this admirable exposition.

Highly coloured as the language used under the sixth seal may appear to us, to the Jew, animated by the spirit of the Old Testament, it was simply that in which he had been accustomed to express his expectations of any new dispensation of the Almighty, of any striking crisis in the history of the world. Whenever he thought of the Judge of all the earth as manifesting Himself in a greater than ordinary degree, and as manifesting Himself in that truth and righteousness which was the glorious distinction of His character, he took advantage of such figures as we now have before us. To the fall of Jerusalem, therefore, to every great crisis in human history, and to the close of all, they may be fittingly applied. In the eloquent language of Dr. Vaughan, "These words are wonderful in all senses, not least in this sense: that they are manifold in their accomplishment. Wherever there is a little flock in a waste wilderness; wherever there is a church in a world; wherever there is a power of unbelief, ungodliness, and violence, throwing itself upon Christ's faith and Christ's people and seeking to overbear, and to demolish, and to destroy; whether that power be the power of Jewish bigotry and fanaticism, as in the days of the first disciples; or of pagan Rome, with its idolatries and its cruelties, in the days of St. John; or of papal Rome, with its lying wonders and its anti-Christian assumptions, in ages later still; or of open and rampant atheism, as in the days of the first French Revolution; or of a subtler and more insidious infidelity like that which is threatening now to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect; wherever and whatever this power may be — and it has had a thousand forms, and may be destined yet to assume a thousand more — then, in each successive century, the words of Christ to His first disciples adapt themselves afresh to the circumstances of His

struggling servants; warn them of danger; exhort them to patience, arouse them to hope, assure them of victory; tell of a near end for an individual and for a generation; tell also of a far end, not forever to be postponed, for time itself and for the world; predict a destruction which shall befall each enemy of the truth, and predict a destruction which shall befall the enemy himself whom each in turn has represented and served; explain the meaning of tribulation, show whence it comes, and point to its swallowing up in glory; reveal the moving hand above, and disclose, from behind the cloud which conceals it, the clear, definite purpose and the unchanging, loving will. Thus understood, each separate downfall of evil becomes a prophecy of the next and of the last; and the partial fulfilment of our Lord's words in the destruction of Jerusalem, or of St. John's words in the downfall of idolatry and the dismemberment of Rome, becomes itself in turn a new warrant for the Church's expectation of the Second Advent and of the day of Judgment." (*Expositor's Bible*, Rev. chapter 6.)

The seventh seal reveals the divine consolations for the saints and the glorious victory of the Church of Christ over all enemies. The seven trumpets and the vision of the bowls are occupied with the same exalted themes of the overthrow of iniquity and the conquests of the kingdom of heaven. Even the great Armageddon (Rev. 16:16), so much talked of, is a description of the great conflict of spiritual forces in the world of men. "The spirits of the devils" warring against the saints of God, and mobilizing "the kings of the earth" in moral opposition to God and His Christ.

The symbolic times and numbers of the Revelation have similar application to the times and events that were before St. John, and indicate men, kingdoms, events, and seasons connected with the great world upheavals of his time and immediately after.

For instance, the number of the beast, 666 (Rev. 13:

18), that has formed the basis of so much conjecture, and which an ingenious mathematician has worked out to spell Kaiser. That number has done service as a brand for various religious and civil despots who have terrorized their fellows. It is evident, however, that the beast John saw came historically nearer to him than the Kaiser. As a matter of fact, the number has been worked out to spell the Roman Empire under the persecutions of which John was suffering banishment "for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Rev. 1:9.)

It is worked out after this fashion. Previous to the invention of figures by the Arabs in the tenth century, letters of the alphabet were used for numbers. The Greeks assigned to their letters a numerical value corresponding to their order in the alphabet. The Romans followed the same practice. The following is the Greek alphabet, with the English equivalents and the numerical value attached to each letter according to the generally received system:

Alpha . . . . . a . . . . .	1	Nu . . . . . n . . . . .	50
Beta . . . . . b . . . . .	2	Xi . . . . . x . . . . .	60
Gamma . . . . . g . . . . .	3	Omicron . . . short o . .	70
Delta . . . . . d . . . . .	4	Pi . . . . . p . . . . .	80
Epsilon . . . . . e . . . . .	5	Rho . . . . . r . . . . .	100
Zeta . . . . . z . . . . .	7	Sigma . . . . . s . . . . .	200
Eta . . . . . long e . .	8	Tau . . . . . t . . . . .	300
Theta . . . . . th . . . . .	9	Upsilon . . . . . u . . . . .	400
Iota . . . . . i . . . . .	10	Phi . . . . . ph . . . . .	500
Kappa . . . . . k . . . . .	20	Chi . . . . . ch . . . . .	600
Lambda . . . . . l . . . . .	30	Psi . . . . . ps . . . . .	700
Mu . . . . . m . . . . .	40	Omega . . . . . long o . .	800

This method of representing numbers by letters of the alphabet gave rise to a practice among the an-

cients of representing names also by numbers. Examples of this kind abound in the writing of heathens, Jews, and Christians. This was clearly the custom in the apostolic age. The common designation of the Roman Empire, which then ruled the world, was The Latin Kingdom, which put in Greek is *e* (long) *latine basileia*. Give this its numerical value and it works out thus:

Eta	.....e	8	}	The
Lamba	.....l	30		
Alpha	.....a	1	}	Latin
Tau	.....t	300		
Iota	.....i	10		
Nu	.....n	50		
Eta	.....e	8		
Beta	.....b	2	}	Kingdom
Alpha	.....a	1		
Sigma	.....s	200		
Iota	.....i	10		
Lambda	.....l	30		
Epsilon	.....e	5		
Iota	.....i	10		
Alpha	.....a	1		
		666		

Then the number of the Latin Kingdom or Roman Empire is 666. No other kingdom on earth can be found to contain that number. The beast of this chapter is plainly intended to represent a kingdom after the manner of Daniel from which St. John so largely draws his imagery. All the descriptions of the blasphemy and persecution of this beast identifies it with the Roman Empire. As the number of the beast, 666, spells

out the Latin Kingdom or the Roman Empire, the identity seems complete. It may be objected that the number of the beast was the number of a man, and therefore the beast must be a man. But every kingdom has its representative man or king in which is vested all the authority and power of the kingdom. The king and his kingdom, particularly under the ancient autocracies, were one. Therefore, the number of the Latin kingdom, 666, would be the number of the blasphemous persecutor, the Roman Cæsar. Some difficulties may be experienced in harmonizing all the details of this part of the vision with this interpretation. But this may be due more to our ignorance of the details of the actual facts of the times, religious and political upheavals, and sufferings of the saints under the pagan religion and false prophets, than to any defect in the interpretation itself. It has, at least, the merit of being consistent with the general scope and imagery of the book and is far more reasonable than any other theory that has been propounded.

We have made no attempt to give a full exposition of this enigmatical book, neither do we undertake to dogmatize on the suggested interpretations we have offered. These have been set forth to show that the fanciful predictions based upon these revelations are not supported by the plain statements contained therein. The outstanding rule of exegesis must be adhered to, namely, that the figurative and obscure passages of scripture must be interpreted in harmony with those which are plain and literal statements of fact. This we have assiduously followed, and find much that is distinctly at variance with premillennialism. We cannot find anything in harmony with sound exposition that lends any weight to the theory of a bodily mil-



lennial reign of Jesus on earth. Throughout the New Testament, the gospel of Jesus is the saving power of the world, and there is no statement to the effect that the gospel is inadequate for the conversion of the world, and that a new dispensation of saving power must be brought in before the "kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."

The last chapter of Revelation opens with the vision of "the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and the tree of life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations." (Rev. 22:1, 2.) Jesus likened the saving power of grace under the gospel to living water. To the woman at the well He said, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:13, 14.) This figure of the water of salvation is taken from the prophets. Isaiah said, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song and is become my salvation. Therefore, with joy shall I draw water from the wells of salvation." (Isa. 12:2, 3.) "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat." (Isa. 55:1.) The Bible closes with the great and universal appeal, "And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let him that heareth say, 'Come.' And let him that is athirst, Come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17.) All who respond to this appeal and drink of the living waters, will get such

an experience of the saving power of God's grace, as will satisfy his soul with peace and joy. By the flowing forth of this crystal pure water out of the throne of God and the Lamb the nations will be saved and healed.

### 5. *Epistolary Testimony*

Chronologically, the study of the apostolic epistles would precede that of Revelation; but we are not so particular about chronology as we are of the scriptural teaching of the kingdom of God in its relation to the return of Jesus. The Book of Revelation, packed full as it is, with the prophetic imagery of the prophecies of Ezekiel and Daniel, and being so closely connected with Christ's predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem, naturally follows the study of these predictions. The principal reason for adopting this order in our review of the scriptural teaching of the coming again of Jesus, is that the premillennial writers make these prophetic and apocalyptic writings the chief source of their proofs upon which they base their predictions regarding the millennium. In our study we have shown that these scriptures do not warrant their assumption.

When we turn to the epistles, it must be kept in mind that the apostles were Jews, and shared the misconceptions of their Scribes and Rabbins, namely, that when the Messiah came He would deliver Israel from the domination of a foreign power, and not only restore the Davidic glory, but give them world conquest. It never dawned on them that the coming of the Messiah could mean the destruction of their holy city with its temple, the abolition of the Mosaic polity, and the complete disintegration of their nation. It was the refusal of Jesus to accept their popular national conception of the Messianic kingdom, and allow Himself to be made king over

Israel, and His persistent warnings of approaching national disaster, that aroused the opposition of the rulers of the people and provoked His crucifixion. Even after the resurrection, the chosen twelve clung to this national hope and looked for its realization. While the Pentecostal blessing wrought a miraculous change in the moral character of these praying, devout disciples, and equipped them to be living witnesses of Jesus, it did not clear away all the mental fog concerning the national political expectations. It was considerable time before any of these zealous, self-denying preachers of righteousness realized the scope of their mission, "to the uttermost parts of the earth." It required a special vision thrice repeated, and corroborated by a counterpart to the devout, praying Cornelius to compel Peter to break through his racial prejudices and preach the gospel to even such a good man as the Roman centurion. Even then he was strongly rebuked by his co-disciples for such a breach of national exclusiveness, and notwithstanding the evident manifestations of divine sanction confirming the reality of the vision on the house top in Joppa, it was with great difficulty that he convinced the infant Church that "to the Gentiles also God had granted repentance unto life." Some of the Jewish Christians were never reconciled to the inclusion of the Gentiles into the covenants of grace, holding tenaciously even to the last their national misconceptions of the Messianic kingdom. It is thus clear that very good men, "full of faith and the Holy Ghost," may entertain erroneous ideas, and be grievously mistaken in regard to national politics and even theological dogma.

The conversion of the enthusiastic and energetic young scholar and persecutor, Saul of Tarsus, was a

very important accession to the infant Christian Church. He was especially ordained as an apostle to the Gentiles. He was educated in the schools of the Rabbins, and imbued with all their racial exclusiveness and national hopes. A great revolution took place in the mind and sentiments of this Hebrew of the Hebrews, of the narrowest sect of the Pharisees, when he accepted the commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. We are indebted to his scholarly pen for the most profound treatises of Christian theology to be found in the New Testament. His treatment of eschatology is somewhat fragmentary. He raises some questions which he leaves quite unsettled. It seems that some of his earlier statements are colored by his early training and national aspirations. He seldom refers to the kingdom of God. This may be accounted for by the fact that he is writing to Gentile Christians, who could not share his national expectations. Religiously he emphasized, as does no other apostle, the fact that by the sacrifice of Christ, the middle wall of partition between the Jews and Gentiles was broken down (Eph. 2:11-22), so that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28.) He gives us the very best definition of the kingdom when he urges, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 14:14.) It does not consist in external organization, ritualistic observations, or systems of theology. But in the operation of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer, imparting to him "righteousness and peace and joy," a definite personal experience and a consciously holy character. In his comprehensive summary of the privileges of sainthood

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through the blood of Jesus, Paul wrote, "Giving thanks unto God the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance among the saints of light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear son." (Col. 1:12, 13.) This is not a translation to take place in the future, but one that has been completed, "Hath translated us into the kingdom." The kingdom was then established, and Paul considered himself and his fellow Christians as citizens thereof. This is in harmony with all his teaching on the triumphs of grace through faith in Jesus, by which the dominion of sin is destroyed and Christ reigns supreme in heart and life. (Rom. 5:7 and 6:11-23.)

Paul also gives warning against the sins that exclude people from the kingdom. After specifying some of these sins, he says, "As I have told you in time past that those that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:21.) For "the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. 6:9, 10.)

Here again the kingdom of God is already established in the world as the right or inheritance of the children of God. But this kingdom holds in promise the eternal glory of Christ for all who are in Him. In his great resurrection chapter, Paul endeavors to explain the nature of the resurrection body and life. From the well attested fact of the resurrection of Jesus, he establishes the belief in the resurrection of all who are Christ's at His coming. "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power." (1 Cor. 15:23, 24.)

The millennialists claim that the millennium separates the coming of Christ and "the end," when Christ will deliver up the kingdom unto the Father. There is nothing here, however, to indicate the lapse of a thousand years or any saving activities on the part of Jesus between His coming and the end. The more consistent interpretation is that at the resurrection of the saints, Christ will deliver up to the Father the mediatorial kingdom, under which, by the Holy Spirit's ministry of redemption, the world is being saved. It is under the power of the gospel that Jesus will put "down all rule, and all authority and power" that exalts itself against righteousness. If one is disposed to question as to why the delay in the assertion of this sovereign power, the ready answer is, there is no delay. Jesus does not rule by arbitrary power but by persuading and drawing. "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." (John 12:32.) This saving work has been in operation ever since Pentecost. It would have been hastened if men had been faithful. The reason it has not progressed more rapidly is because the disciples of Jesus have not always been loyal to the truth. Peter meets the question with the explanation, "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Pet. 3:8.)

This gospel interpretation harmonizes with the remainder of Paul's argument. As he develops his theme, he distinguishes between the terrestrial and the celestial, the natural and the spiritual, the earthly and the heavenly. He eliminates all that is material and corruptible, and makes this positive statement, "Now, I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incor-

ruption.” (1 Cor. 15: 50.) He then proceeds to discuss the triumphant and immortal glory of all who obtain victory through our Lord Jesus Christ in such a way as to forbid the conclusion that he is here thinking of a bodily reign of Jesus on the earth.

The appearing, manifestation, revelation, or coming of Christ did occupy a prominent place in the thought and teaching of Paul. The first Epistle to the Thessalonians is not only the earliest of Paul’s epistles, but the earliest New Testament writings. It is generally conceded that this epistle was written before any of the gospels. “No epistle of Paul shows so clearly as this one the kinship of view point which he had with his race. Distress and affliction had visited the new church, and to establish them in their faith, their hopes were directed towards the events of the end. The persecutors who had filled ‘the measure of their sins’ were soon to be overcome by a catastrophic judgment. ‘The wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.’” (*Studies in Pauline Eschatology*, by Dr. E. J. Pratt, p. 122.)

This judgment upon the Jews who filled up their sins by killing the prophets, crucifying the Lord Jesus, and persecuting the apostles, forbidding them to preach to the nations that they might be saved (1 Thess. 2: 15, 16), was not a catastrophe that was reserved for some indefinite time in the future, thousands of years away, but a judgment that was already pronounced and in the course of execution. He says, *ephthasen de ep autous*, “is come upon them.”

The language of this passage is so similar to Christ’s denunciation of rebellious Jerusalem that it is very difficult to get away from the conviction that Paul had this predicted doom before his mind. While he pro-

nounces such severe judgment upon the ungodly, he promises rich blessings to those who "turn from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven." (1 Thess. 1:9, 10.) These faithful saints were His hope and joy and crown of rejoicing "in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming." It is very evident that he was thinking of the immediate coming or *parousia* of the Lord Jesus. But to him the wrath upon the enemies of Christ, and the glory of the saints were both at "His coming." The expectation of the immediate coming of Christ raised the question of the prospects of the dead, and their relation to the living saints. This disputed point he undertakes to settle in closing the fourth chapter, by saying, "that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (or go before) them which are asleep." (1 Thess. 4:15.) The expression, "We which are alive," indicates that he was expecting the coming of Jesus during his lifetime. In these passages, Paul does not clearly define his views. It would seem that he had not thought his way clear through his subject. The threatened doom to Jerusalem and the Jewish nation exerted an influence upon his mind. The expectation that even yet a Messianic kingdom would be established under which the enemies of God would be punished and the saints rewarded, had its influence, and the final consummation of the ages with the resurrection glory was before him. But undoubtedly his expectation was of an immediate coming of Jesus in judgment upon the ungodly and vindication for the righteous.

This epistle left these questions unsettled and much controversy seems to have been aroused in this church, which called forth the Second Epistle. These Chris-



tians were in danger of losing their grip on the essentials of salvation because of the dissensions over the matter. Paul beseeches them not to be "shaken in mind, nor troubled neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, that the day of Christ is at hand." (2 Thess. 2:3, 4.)

If in the first epistle, Paul expected Christ to come immediately, he seems now to have revised his opinion and warns these Christians not to be troubled, even by a letter from himself, probably referring to his first epistle. "The day of Christ" now appeared more distant. He intimates events that must precede the coming, notably, "the falling away," and the revelation of "the man of sin." He does not undertake to define this man of sin, nor what he means by "the falling away." Evidently, there was some unrecorded sermon or conversation in which he had explained these things. He said, "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you of these things." (2 Thess. 2:5.) Many conjectures have been made regarding this "man of sin" who is taken as a sign of the coming of Jesus. Every generation has had heralds of his appearance, featured by premillennialists. It was apparently a common appellation for any prominent person who proved false and may have meant the Roman general that besieged Jerusalem. It is worthy of note that he is called "the son of perdition," the phrase by which Jesus designated the traitor Judas, and may be rendered "the son of destruction." Jesus also predicted a falling away before the destruction of Jerusalem. "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall grow cold." (Matt. 24:12.) There must be stronger reasons than appear in the text, to prove that the "man of sin" and "the falling away"

were primarily understood by Paul to appear in the twentieth century. If we admit that we do not understand the meaning of Paul, we are in good company. Even Peter, who was much nearer to Paul, so near that he might have looked him up and talked the matter over with him, was perplexed by his teaching on this subject. He said, "Even as our beloved brother Paul, also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, (Judgment and the coming of Christ) in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures to their own destruction." (2 Pet. 3:15, 16.)

Paul's expectation of being alive at the coming of Jesus seemed to fade with the advancing years. When writing to the Philippians, he was not expecting Christ's coming as much as he was his own departure. He was now a prisoner in Rome and his change of fortune seems to have modified his views on the coming of Christ. He wrote, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." (Phil. 1:21-24.) When Paul was brought before Nero, Emperor of Rome, the second time, he wrote his second epistle to Timothy. He closed with these impressive declarations, "I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom. . . . I am now ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have fin-

ished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only but unto all them that love His appearing." (2 Tim. 4:1-8.)

The appearing here is to "judge the quick and the dead," therefore, the great judgment, rather than a millennial kingdom, is the scene of the revelation of the full glory of God, and the dispensing of the rewards of righteousness. While there is no evidence in the epistles of Paul of a millennial reign of Jesus on the earth, there was ever before him a clear conception of a return of Jesus. At times he conceived of him as being "at hand" or right near. This expression, "The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5), may mean the approach of death or the destruction of Jerusalem as consistently as of a coming judgment, and is often so applied. But to Paul, the Lord's Supper was a token of a future coming. He said, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death until He come." (1 Cor. 11:26.)

Paul does not attempt to systematize his views on the coming of Jesus. As far as his epistles indicate, he did not attempt to work out any details. He simply makes broad statements regarding the coming of Jesus, and the judgment, except in the earliest epistles to the Thessalonian Church. But of this he was positive, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10.)

There is only one passage in the Epistle of James that bears upon our subject. In his incisive denunciation of those who are greedy for gold, and are cor-

rupted by pleasure and selfishness, he exhorted the faithful to be patient "unto the coming of the Lord." "Stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." There is nothing in this passage to differentiate it from the teaching of Paul. The certainty of having to meet the Lord, the judge of all, "who standeth at the door" (James 5:1-9), should restrain evil men and spur them to deal honestly and fairly with their fellows; and inspire the saints "to patient continuance in well doing, knowing that in due season they shall reap if they faint not." The statements, "For the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," and "Behold, the judge standeth at the door," show that James looked for the immediate coming of the Lord to judgment. There is no hint of a millennium between "the coming of the Lord" and the judgment of the wicked.

When Peter wrote his second epistle there was much questioning about the nearness of the Lord's coming and the predicted judgment. In his first epistle he said, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God. And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" (1 Pet. 4:17, 18.) There were backsliders and contentious people in the church. Controversy was rife, and many doubted the nearness of the threatened judgment and scoffed at the prediction of the coming of the Lord, saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." (2 Pet. 3:3, 4.) Peter rebuked these for their folly, and assured them "that God is not slack concerning His promise as some

men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (Verse 9.) Then he emphatically declares that "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (Verse 10), and describes the attendant catastrophe in the most lurid and startling language. Peter does not seem to know anything about a dispensation of saving power, subsequent to, and far superior and more glorious than the gospel to be inaugurated by our Lord at His coming again. To him the gospel is the last word in the longsuffering mercy of God to save the world. He brooks no reflection upon the gospel because he had been associated with Jesus in the Holy Mount and through the crisis of his life, and spoke from first-hand knowledge. He was expecting the church to continue after his death, and wrote this epistle to warn them against listening to the detractors of the gospel. He said, "Moreover, I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables; when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of his majesty." (2 Pet. 1:15, 16.)

Against the false teachers and disturbers, he pronounces judgment and destruction. "Whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not." (2 Pet. 2:1-3.) He summons as proof of the irrevocable judgments of God, "the angels that sinned" and "are reserved unto judgment" (Verses 4, 5, 6), the old world destroyed by water, and the turning of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes, and says, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the

unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." (Verse 9.) This, in brief, is the line of argument that led up to the lurid description of the dissolution of heaven and earth, in "the day of God," to be replaced by a "new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Pet. 3:10-13.)

Is Peter here describing the consummation of all things? Or is the destruction of Jerusalem and the judgment of the Jewish nation foretold by Jesus the scene that occupies his attention? When he says "all things shall be dissolved," "the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat," is he speaking of the physical elements of our solar system, or the ecclesiastical polity and the civil government of the Jewish nation? Does the "new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" mean that there will be such a fire as will dissolve this earth into its original gases and all the planets will be consumed away? Or is he in the hyperbolic imagery of Hebrew prophecy picturing in the most impressive manner possible the passing away of the whole Mosaic economy, to which the scoffers and false teachers were clinging, and the utter dissolution of the whole civil organization; and the emergence of a purified Christian Church, and government? It is a well known fact of history that the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans did utterly dissolve all the ecclesiastical polity of the Jews, and left them without a vestige of their national government. Peter's illustration of the destruction of "the old world" by the flood gives support to this view, as also the prophetic descriptions of the national catastrophes that figure so largely in the scriptures. Whatever view may be accepted, there is no trace here of the gospel of salvation through faith

in Jesus being succeeded by a millennial reign of the returned Lord for the salvation of the world.

All these predictions and scenes are of a judgment to come, and they are supported by the national judgments of the past. Those who look upon these figures of Peter as apocalyptic imagery drawn from the prophets of Israel have strong support in the opening passages of this third chapter, "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you: in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour." (2 Pet. 3:1, 2.)

This imminent and certain judgment urged by Peter is a strong incentive to holiness of heart and life. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." (Verse 11.) "Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (Verses 16, 17.)

In summing up the testimony of the apostles, it seems quite evident that they did expect the return of the Lord Jesus in bodily form. Their national conceptions were confirmed by the ascension scene, when the angel said to them, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11.) Did the angel mean that Jesus would return in human nature to take up His abode again among men, and by a personal bodily presence conduct the divine work of

saving the world? Looking at the question from this distance in the full light of Bible teaching and the developments of gospel evangelism and Christian history, it seems inconceivable that this was the meaning of the angel. Though Jesus arose from the dead with His physical body, a great and mysterious change had taken place. His confidential disciples met Him, conversed with Him, but did not recognize Him. The devoted women who ministered unto Him met Him at the sepulchre and mistook Him for the gardener. He appeared in the midst of His perplexed and frightened disciples in the upper room, with the doors locked, and disappeared without difficulty or inconvenience. Yet He asked His disciples to feel His flesh and bones, and satisfy themselves that He was not a spirit, and He ate with them. For forty days He showed Himself alive after His passion. This was necessary to leave no room to doubt the reality of His resurrection. But who can tell the condition of His body when He ascended unto heaven in the presence of His astonished disciples? We are here confronted by mysterious spiritual conditions that we cannot understand. We do not know enough about the ascension body of Jesus to dogmatize about the descension body, even if He were to return in the same bodily form. According to His own emphatic statement to His sorrowing disciples, His saving and governing power in His highly exalted position at the right hand of God is far greater than if He were bodily present in the world. He said, "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." (John 16:7.) Therefore, His spiritual presence is more potent for the salvation of the



world than His bodily presence. The coming of the Son of Man in His glory presents to us a condition we cannot describe. John on Patmos had a vision of the glorified Presence and attempted a description, but we cannot conceive the glory thus revealed. This seems merely like a word picture of a spiritual reality that is far beyond our physical limitations. We are led by the teaching of the Gospel to worship Jesus as an infinite and Omnipresent Saviour, and we cannot now think of Him as a localized ruler. True, He did come to earth as a babe in the manger and perfectly identify Himself with man, and in His humiliation suffered human limitations; but this was to reveal God the Father to man in such a way that He might be understood, and by His own death to atone for human sin that man might be reconciled to God. Now that He has been exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, "Far above all principalities, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head of all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:21-23); it is impossible to think of Him passing through a second humiliation, taking upon Himself again a bodily form, and becoming a localized sovereign of the nations of this world. Whatever may be the nature of His coming again, it will be in glory to judge the world, not to rule the world.

### 6. *The Coming of Christ to Judgment*

We have reviewed the comings of Christ that may be spoken of as past, but the New Testament gives prominence to a coming or *parousia* that is yet future, and

commonly designated "the second coming of Christ." As this phrase is not used in the gospels, and there are admittedly several comings mentioned by Jesus and the apostles, the application of the phrase to the future appearing of Christ is more confusing than edifying. We have failed to discover any scriptural warrant for the theory of an earthly millennial reign of Jesus in the body. The kingdom of heaven is not a system of divine government reserved for a future display of divine power and glory. The kingdom of heaven is already among men in the earth. "And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, 'Lo, here!' or, 'lo, there!' for, behold, the kingdom of God is within, or among you." (Luke 17:20, 21.) The kingdom of heaven as the rule and realm of God in the hearts and lives of men and women regenerates and controls the world not by external authority and power, but by internal grace and moral energy under the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The principles and precepts of this kingdom are most discriminating: sifting the good from the evil, condemning and destroying the unbelieving and disobedient; and saving and sanctifying for eternal glory all who believe in Jesus and obey the gospel. This fact forms the startling call of John the Baptist to repentance. He said:

And now, also, the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge

His floor, and gather the wheat into His garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. (Matt. 3: 11-13.)

Throughout the scriptures, this inscrutable, unerring, discriminating, and sifting judgment of God is clearly taught and strongly emphasized. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews throws this teaching into this forceful appeal:

Let us labor, therefore, to enter into His rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. (Heb. 4: 11-13.)

This omniscient discernment of the secrets of the human heart lifts the judgments of God infinitely above the frailties and limitations of the human mind. This is why even the most enlightened men are led to the conclusion of Paul: "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are thy judgments and thy ways past finding out." (Rom. 11: 33.)

The reality of a "judgment to come" lies at the base of all apostolic teaching. The day of judgment is familiarly referred to as "the day of the Lord" and "that day." When preaching on Mars Hill, Paul declared, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He gives assurance unto all

men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." (Acts 17:30, 31.) This judgment will take place at the coming or appearing of the Lord Jesus. To Timothy, Paul wrote, "I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at His appearing and His kingdom." (2 Tim. 4:1, 8.) In that day appointed of God, Paul expected to receive the crown of life from the Lord, the righteous judge. Not only are the unrighteous condemned at the coming of the Lord Jesus, but the saints are rewarded. The punishment of the wicked and glory of the saints are so connected with the coming of Jesus that it is only by an unwarranted violence to plain language that a millennial period can be thrust between them. In his first epistle to the Thessalonians, after he explains to the Christians the comforting fact that those which are "alive and remain at His coming will not prevent (or go before) them which are asleep" (1 Thess. 4:15), he proceeds in the next chapter to connect with "the day of the Lord," judgment and destruction. In the second epistle he leaves no room to doubt the close connection of the salvation of the faithful and the destruction of the disobedient at "the coming of the Lord."

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; so that we ourselves glory in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: seeing that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be re-

vealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired of all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. (2 Thess. 1: 3-10.)

This is one of Paul's comprehensive sentences, in which he gathers up so many details of the gospel teaching. He contrasts the evident glory of those who believe in Jesus with the sure destruction of those who disobey the gospel "in that day" when the Lord shall be revealed from heaven to take vengeance in flaming fire, on them that know not God, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints. There is no mistaking the connection. The revelation of vengeance is when He comes to be glorified, accompanied by the angels from heaven.

Peter, when preaching to Cornelius, said that Jesus commanded them (the apostles) "to preach unto the people and testify that Jesus of Nazareth was ordained of God to be judge of the quick and the dead." (Acts 10: 42.) In his second epistle, he connects the judgment with "the day of the Lord" when the Lord shall come in the destroying fire. (2 Pet. 3.) Jude joins this coming to judgment with the prophecies of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, saying, "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." (Jude 14: 15.)

There is, therefore, a unanimity of apostolic testi-

mony that when the Lord cometh in "that day," it will be for judgment. To get the basis of this doctrine, we naturally turn to the gospels which record the teaching of Jesus. We have reviewed the predicted judgment of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation and its fulfilment, as well as the judgments upon the other nations that opposed the truth and persecuted the saints. These national judgments form the background of the general teaching of a great judgment of the world yet to come. Jesus kept the emphasis upon the judgments of God as a warning against indifference and sin, and as an incentive to diligent faith and holiness. In the Sermon on the Mount, He urged, "Enter ye in at the strait gate," and shows the danger of entering the broad way of destruction. He also gives the infallible test of character in the fruit of the life, and says, "Many shall say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils and in thy name done many wonderful works?' Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7:13-23.) All through the teaching of Jesus is the condemnation of sin and the emphasis upon a coming judgment, when the inequalities of life will be adjudicated and a just recompense will be awarded to every person according to his works, whether they be good or bad. As He draws nearer the close of His ministry, and the opposition against Him increases, He becomes more definite and pronounced regarding the coming judgment. In His closing addresses in the temple, He announces the awful woes upon the "scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," which lead up to the prediction of judgment on the Holy City and the whole commonwealth of Israel. In this national judgment is given us

an earnest of the just judgment of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. In illustrating this fact, Jesus recalls the judgment upon the old world and says, "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." (Matt. 24:37.) The conditions which prevailed when fire was rained upon the cities of the plains prevailed when Jerusalem was destroyed by the fire of the Romans, just as they prevailed when Babylon was taken by Darius, the Mede, and when Halifax, N. S., was destroyed by the awful explosion on December 6, 1917, and doubtless will prevail when the Son of Man comes to judgment and all the holy angels with Him. Persons will be engaged in their ordinary employments and one will be taken and another left. This is the outstanding fact the parables of judgment press upon us with such intense urgency. In the parable of the servant who is set to guard the house, he knows not when the thief may come, therefore, he must keep a sharp lookout. "But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, 'My Lord delayeth his coming,' and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 24:42-51.)

Matthew groups the judgment parables of Jesus in order of climax so as to make the most profound impression. The parable of the virgins teaches the necessity of inward grace as a qualification for admission into the marriage feast when the bridegroom comes. At the midnight cry, "all those virgins arose." (Matt. 25:1-13.) It is only by a very strange perversion of

language that a millennial period can be inserted between the rising of the wise and that of the foolish virgins. The wise were qualified and ready to enter into the feast with the bridegroom; the foolish were not prepared and were shut out.

In the parable of the talents, the emphasis is upon the necessity of profitably using the talents we have, be they less or more. (Matt. 25:14-30.) We might group with this the parable of the pounds which teaches practically the same lesson. (Luke 19:12-27.) At the return of the lord all those servants were called upon to render an account of their talents or pounds. Those who had profitably used theirs were suitably rewarded. The unprofitable servant who failed to use his talent was cast into outer darkness: where "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Of the servant who failed to increase his pound, the order was, "Take from him the pound and give it to him that hath ten pounds." (Luke 19:24, 27.) "But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me." In these judgment scenes, the faithful and the unfaithful are judged at the same time. Otherwise the lord could not have said, "Take ye therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath ten talents." (Matt. 25:28; compare Luke 19:24.)

Then follows the great judgment scene "when the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations." (Matt. 25:31, 46.) It is to be taken for granted that all nations here means all the people. When we speak of nations, we certainly mean the people who compose the nations. The attempt to make a



distinction here between the Gentiles and the Jews is very arbitrary and unwarranted. The all is universal and includes the Jewish nation as well as the Gentile nation. But the elimination of the Jews from this assembly for judgment does not alter the principle. The basis of judgment is the service rendered unto the hungry, naked, sick, and prisoners. The good and the bad stood together and were separated "as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." (Verse 32.) The merciful were surprised at the good accredited to them, the negligent were equally surprised at their condemnation for their neglect. But to those on the right the King shall say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Verse 34.) "Then shall He say to those on His left, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'" (Verse 41.) "These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." (Verse 46.) In these judgment parables there is no room whatever for an extended period between the judgment of the righteous and the wicked. If they are not presented together before the great tribunal, the language is very misleading, and there is no possibility of reasoning it away on any accepted rules of exegesis. This is in harmony with all the teaching of the gospels. In the parable of the tares, the wheat and the tares grow together until "the end of the age" when "the Son of Man shall send his angels and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 13: 40-42.) The same truth is set forth in the parable of the drag net. (Matt. 13: 47-50.)

Another impressive truth common to all these parables of judgment is the element of finality. In both the parable of the tares, and of the drag net, the assorting is at the end of the age. There is no intimation of any further term of probation or new dispensation of saving power. The basis of salvation is the gospel of Jesus. There is no hope held out to those who are rejected in this judgment. The servant who fails to watch is "cut off" or "cut asunder." (Matt. 24:51.) That is final. When the foolish virgins return after the bridegroom has gone in, they find the door shut against them. All their pleading then is unavailing. The emphatic reply is, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not." (Matt. 25:10-12.) That is an end of the matter. The wicked and slothful servant is cast into outer darkness. There is no promise of relief. (Matt. 25:30.) Those who failed to minister "unto one of the least of these my brethren" go into everlasting punishment. (Matt. 25:40, 46.) Those who do not strive to enter in at the strait gate, and are unprepared to go in when "the master of the house has risen up and shut to the door," may stand without and knock at the door pleading for admission, but the only answer evoked is, "I know you not whence ye are. Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." (Luke 13:24-30.)

This teaching of the final judgment at the final coming of Jesus raises many questions that are inexplicable, because we have no revelation regarding them. The Bible does not enter into detail regarding the future life. It simply sets the facts before us in broad outline. There is not even an attempt to systematize these outlines. The little we have is positive. It is given with divine authority, and is enough to stimulate

hope and keep the faithful soul calm and peaceful, looking for that "city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11:10.) The paucity of detail produces a temptation to indulge in conjecture and mystical speculations. It is such speculations that have led to so much confusion of thought. It is helpful to note that Jesus discouraged in His disciples all attempts to discern the secret things of God. When they asked for the positions of honor He quickly replied, "it is not mine to give." (Matt. 20:20, 23.) When they asked, "Are there few that be saved?" He replied, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." (Luke 13:23, 24.) After His resurrection, it would be natural to suppose that Jesus would talk more about the other world and give more detailed information about the divine procedure, but He observed a very discreet silence. The burden of His post resurrection talks was to prepare His disciples to minister more intelligently and effectively to this world, with the assurance that it was by faithful service that they could make sure of the hereafter. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust in much." (Luke 16:10.) Therefore, when the disciples asked of their Lord, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?" He said, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8.)

We need not be anxious to know the divine procedure, or how the final judgment of God will work out in detail. It is enough for us to be impressed with the reality of the righteous judgments of God, and to know that God in the holiness of His being will judge according to the eternal moral principles of His kingdom. The applica-

tion of these principles is involved in all the national and particular judgments accredited to God. These judgments of the Old Testament adumbrate the final judgment which is before us. Thus we have the national judgment of Israel intertwined in the thought and teaching of the gospel with the final judgment.

Both events appear in the discourse (Matt. 24) and they appear together. But this is only in accordance with Biblical prophecy, and in this again the Lord attaches Himself to the Old Testament. Events which history shows to have been widely separated are brought together in what has been described as prophetic perspective or timeless sequence or casual connection or as if one formed part of the other. In the great prophecies of judgment and in those also of deliverance, distinct and separate occurrences are often given in the one figure. In the eighth and ninth chapters of Isaiah, for example, the deliverance from the Assyrian invader and the rise of the great light or the Prince of Peace are described as if they were synchronous, or one and the same event. In the announcements of judgment which are made by Zephaniah and Obadiah, the final judgment and the preliminary partial acts of judgment appear to be identical. The deliverances and chastisements of the near future are interpreted as the coming of Jehovah, or advent of His kingdom, and are regarded as embracing all future deliverances or judgments. The end of Israel's history was the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, and in every stage of the history that kingdom was coming. In the long process of redemption and judicial acts which made up that history, the prophets, recognized in each such act a real and a relatively decisive advent of God and His kingdom. In His eschatological discourses, Christ recognizes, as Old Testament prophecy did, the partial and preliminary manifestations of the kingdom as involving the final. He speaks of the two as one and declares before the council that *henceforth*, from the then present time, they would "see him sitting at the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." (R.

V.) (Dr. Salmond, *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, page 244.)

This outstanding feature of the prophetic and apocalyptic writings of the Bible must be kept in mind when we study the judgment scenes depicted by John in Revelation. Amid the imagery with which he describes the great religious and political upheavals that were pending, he sets forth the final judgment in a most graphic manner. He says:

And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the heaven and the earth fled away; and there was no more place for them. And I saw the dead small and great stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which was in it; and death and hell (or hades) delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to his works. And death and hell were cast into a lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20: 11-15.)

The claim of the millennialists that the righteous had been judged a thousand years before, and this judgment was of "the rest of the dead" or the wicked dead, is not supported by the language. The book of life was the exclusive record of the saints and the mention of it as one of the books from which the dead were judged, suggests the presence of the righteous before the great white throne, just as in the judgment scene depicted by Jesus, the faithful heirs of the kingdom were before "the throne of his glory." (Matt. 25:31.) Jesus, in His impressive discourse on the judgment, said, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in

the which all that are in their graves shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:28, 29.)

There is no justification for attempting to set the judgment of the evil a millennium after the resurrection and judgment of the righteous. We are not able to determine how much time may be consumed in the execution of judgment; but there is no intimation of a new dispensation of saving power intervening. Both the righteous and the wicked will be called forth to judgment at the coming of the Lord Jesus. This coming of Jesus to judgment is final. As the gospel of salvation through the benefits of the atonement of Jesus under the ministry of the Holy Spirit exhausts the moral pressure of redeeming mercy and saving grace, the coming of Christ to judge the world in righteousness is the last scene.

There can be no more moral tests. The test under the Holy Spirit is *final*, not because God is arbitrary and unwilling, but simply because the dispensation of the Holy Spirit exhausts all moral procedure. *There is nothing more that can be done.* Of course if sainthood were automatic, much more could be done; but inasmuch as it is and must be moral (to be sainthood), the notion of a second probation is inconceivable. (*The Christian Faith*, by Dr. Olin Curtis, page 343.)

If the dispensation of the Holy Spirit exhausts all moral procedure and makes a second probation inconceivable, it also makes a future dispensation of salvation on any terms inconceivable. Moral salvation must be granted and received on moral conditions and by moral methods. There is no hint in the scriptures of salvation ever being imparted on other than the moral

terms of the personal faith and obedience of a free personality.

The seal of finality is everywhere stamped upon the gospel of Jesus. The parable of the householder who planted a vineyard and let it out to husbandmen clearly teaches that the coming of the Son was the supreme and final effort of God to save the world. True, the vineyard is taken from the wicked husbandmen and let out unto others, which shall render unto the householder the fruits in their season. (Matt. 21:33-43.) The application of this parable is: the kingdom of heaven will be taken from the faithless, rebellious Jews and given to the Gentiles, "a nation bringing forth fruits thereof." There is no intimation of any change in the vineyard or terms of tenure. "The stone rejected" by the rulers of the Jews is the head of the corner. "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone set at naught of you builders which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:10, 11.)

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the tormented Dives had great concern for his five brethren, who were in danger of sharing his suffering, and he urged that Lazarus be released and sent back to earth to warn them. Abraham says, "They have Moses and the prophets: let them hear them." But Dives pleaded, "Nay, Father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." But Abraham gave the decisive reply, "If they hear not Moses and the

prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." (Luke 16: 19-31.) This is final. Those who reject the Son under the appeal of the gospel have no other age or dispensation to which they can turn.

There is one passage that seems to support the millennialist theory of a second coming of Jesus unto salvation, except when studied with its full context. The passage reads: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear a second time without sin unto salvation." (Heb. 9: 27, 28.)

Does this mean that the apostles were looking for a new and larger dispensation of saving power at the second coming of Jesus? If the writer of this epistle considered the gospel inadequate for the salvation of the world, and believed that Christ must come again without a sin offering to save men from sin, surely this expectation would reveal itself elsewhere in the epistle. There is one other passage that expresses an immediate coming of Jesus, but it does not hint of any future and more glorious dispensation of saving power. On the contrary, salvation by the sacrifice of Jesus is the sole preparation for receiving "the promise" when He comes. "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Heb. 10: 35-37.)

The immediate coming of Christ here set forth may refer to the destruction of Jerusalem which was of such intense concern to these Hebrew Christians. At



all events, the subject the writer was urging, was sure and swift punishment upon those who opposed the gospel and persecuted the saints (Heb. 10:20-39), particularly those who turned away from the faith, "who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the throne of grace." Yet a very little time and the Lord shall come to judge this people and execute judgment upon this rebellious country. "This is determined because they have filled up the measure of their iniquity, and their destruction slumbereth not." The same swift and certain destruction cometh upon every one who sins "wilfully after that he has received the knowledge of the truth." (Heb. 10:26.) He that rejects the sacrifice of Jesus as an offering for sin, can find no other means of salvation. But the writer says, "We are not of them that draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

Throughout this epistle the writer contrasts the perfect sacrifice of Jesus for sins with the imperfect sacrifices under the ceremonial law of Moses. The whole argument keeps a distinct emphasis upon the all sufficiency of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus for the sin of the world. In contrast with the saving efficacy of the ceremonial and typical offerings for sin at the altar of the sanctuary, he says with strong emphasis, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." (Heb. 9:13, 14.) To the mind of the writer, there was nothing beyond this. The atonement of Jesus exhausted all moral procedure for the salvation of men. He was perfectly satisfied that Jesus is

“able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing that He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” (Heb. 7:25.)

The “appearing the second time without a *sin offering* unto salvation” must be interpreted consistently with the whole teaching of the epistle. The immediate context shows that the writer is here also contrasting the saving power of Jesus with the imperfect atonement offered yearly by the priests, which was a figure of the true atoning blood of Christ. The great issues of life and salvation through the gospel presses to the front the final consummation. Not the coming of Jesus a second time to establish a new dispensation of saving power on the earth, but to judge the world and receive to Himself in the heavenly glory all “who believe to the saving of their souls.” “For it is appointed unto men once to die; but after this, the judgment.” (Heb. 9:27.) During the nearly two thousand years since this trite observation was made, men and women have been dying, multitudes “without hope and without God in the world”; while multitudes have gone down into the valley of the shadow leaning upon the unseen arm of the loving Saviour. Whatever may be the time or circumstance of the final coming of Jesus to judge the world in righteousness, multitudes of both good and bad are passing from this world into the great beyond, “To that country from whose bourn no traveller e’er returns.”

There is, however, the gracious expectation of a glorious resurrection, when by the power of God through Christ the promise of heaven will be fulfilled to all who have fallen asleep in Jesus, as well as to all the saints who are alive at His coming.

As sure as “it is appointed unto man once to die, but

after this the judgment," just so sure was Christ offered upon the Cross of Calvary to bear the sins of the world, "for He tasted death for every man." (Heb. 2:9.) It is equally sure that unto them who are saved by grace through faith, "shall He appear a second time without sin unto salvation."

The distinction between the first coming "as a sin offering," and the second "without a sin offering" is unto those who believe. The first coming was to prepare for all a perfect atonement for sin. Those who accept this atonement and believe to the saving of their souls, anticipate with joy the second coming to receive them into the eternal glory of the many mansions of the Father's house.

In this second coming, "there is an allusion to the return of the high priest from the inner tabernacle; for, after appearing there in the presence of God and making atonement for the people in the plain dress of an ordinary priest (Lev. 16:23, 24), he came out arrayed in his magnificent robes, to bless the people who waited for him in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation." (Clark's *Commentary*, page 751.) Dr. MacKnight says, "There will be this difference between the return of Christ to bless His people, and the return of the high priest to bless the congregation. The latter, after coming out of the most holy place made a new atonement in his pontifical robes for himself and for the people (Lev. 16:24), which showed that the former atonement was not *real* but *typical*. Whereas Jesus after having made atonement (and presented Himself in heaven before God) will not return to the earth for the purpose of making Himself a sacrifice the second time: but having procured eternal redemption for us, by the sacrifice of Himself once offered,

He will return for the purpose of declaring to them who wait for Him that they are accepted, and of bestowing on them the great blessing of eternal life. This reward He, being surrounded by the glory of the Father (Matt. 16:27), will give them in the presence of an assembled universe, both as their *king* and their *priest*. This is the great salvation which Christ came to preach, and which was confirmed to the world by them that heard him." (Ibid., page 751.)

When Christ shall "appear a second time unto salvation," it will not be to give the world a better opportunity to be saved on easier terms, but to bestow upon those who are trusting in Jesus as their Saviour the crowning glory of their faith and hope, a full and final salvation from all worldly conditions and limitations. This is the very highest salvation of which man is capable. Hence, Paul wrote to the saints of Philippi, "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His own glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." (Phil. 3:20, 21.)

Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus.

## CHAPTER X

### THE GOSPEL HOPE

NO review of millennial teaching is complete without a careful study of the gospel hope. It is confidently stated by millennialists that if Jesus is not to return to Jerusalem in bodily form, "and build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down," and assume a millennial reign over all the nations of the earth, Christians have no hope. The Rev. Len Broughton, D.D., says, "The only hope of the redeemed world is the return of our Lord." (*The Second Coming of Christ*, p. 50.) At the Keswick Convention held in Birkenhead, England, September 10th to 14th, 1917, Mr. Horsefield gave a Bible Reading based on Hosea 6:3, with the topic, "His coming as certain as the dawn." The reporter says, "The manifold application of this wondrous thought brought good cheer to many hearts, and in this night of sorrow many saw more clearly that the coming of Christ is our only hope." It might be reasonable to ask if the myriads of devout Christians who cannot accept the millennial theory are without a Christian hope in the world? Multitudes who have no thought of Jesus returning as a world ruler, have a hope which is "as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Heb. 6:19, 20.) Is this a false hope? It is a great source of cheer and good comfort in this night of sorrow, because they are not looking

to this earth for their consolation, but to heaven whither Jesus has entered for them. Is their conscious fellowship with their exalted and glorified Lord a delusion? If our only hope is in the return of Jesus, what about the multitudes who have passed on without seeing the "Son of Man coming in His glory," or without expecting to receive an earthly kingdom? Had they no hope? Dr. Broughton, in his crisp and decisive style, thus disposes off-hand with this question: "Heaven is not yet. Heaven is at the culmination of time. It is beyond the kingdom." (*The Second Coming of Christ*, p. 36.) That is, heaven does not come into view until the thousand years of Christ's millennial reign on earth are completed. Then whither has Jesus gone? Where is He waiting? What is the condition of the sleeping saints? Is all the New Testament teaching about heaven erroneous?

The hope of Israel was not purely political. All the teaching of the Hebrew scriptures, as well as the services of the sanctuary emphasized the reality and glory of a moral redemption and restitution which far transcends the excellency and splendor of all national liberty and restoration. The Psalmist sang:

Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy and at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore. (Psa. 16: 9, R. V.)

The apostles after Pentecost emphasized the Messianic teaching of these Psalms, and focused the hope of Israel upon the expectation of the resurrection and eternal glory. When defending himself before King

Agrippa from the perverse attacks of the Jews, Paul said, "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our Fathers. Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night hope to come. For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26:6.)

The hope of the fathers which Paul here presents with such consummate skill was not the hope of the coming Messiah, because Jesus had already come and been glorified. It was not the hope of a something that was coming to them, but a hope unto which he, like his fathers, was coming. The closing appeal makes it clear that this hope was focused upon the resurrection of the dead and future glory. In another place Paul says, "For our conversation (Gr. citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His own glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." (Phil. 3:20, 21.) It was for the hope of the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:6) that Paul was called in question. He claimed that this was what he had learned as a son of a Pharisee to whose teaching he had always been loyal. It is therefore clear that the religious hope of the Jews as represented in the teaching of the dominant sect, the Pharisees, was the resurrection of the dead and the glorified life which was to follow. The teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus as illuminated by the Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Spirit, gave greater reality and definiteness to this hope. Thereafter, it was interpreted in the light of these great historic events of

the Christ life. The resurrection which came to occupy such a large place in the thought and hope of Paul was not of some special class or sect, but of all the dead. When called upon to meet his accusers and refute the charges of the orator, Tertullus, he unhesitatingly said, "I confess that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets: and have hope toward God, which they themselves allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." (Acts 24:14, 15.) When he finally reached Rome, he called a meeting of the chief of the Jews to explain why he was a prisoner in the imperial city. In that explanation he said, "For this cause, therefore, have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you, because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." (Acts 28:20.)

Paul's interpretation of "the hope of Israel" became the point of cleavage among the Jews. Those who rejected this teaching rejected the deity and Messiahship of Jesus and remained out of the kingdom of God established by the gospel. Those who accepted this interpretation became Christians by repenting of sin, believing in Jesus as "God manifest in the flesh" for the salvation of men, and shared the fullness of "the hope of Israel." This still remains the point of cleavage between the Jews and the Christians.

Through the atoning sacrifice and the resurrection of Jesus this "hope of Israel" became "the hope of the gospel." (Col. 1:23.) In the first chapter of Paul's epistle to the Colossians, the apostle to the Gentiles dwells upon this hope as the Christians' great incentive to sacrifice, suffering, and service for the sake of Jesus and the salvation of men. By the gospel the middle



wall of partition between the Jews and Gentiles was broken down, all class and racial distinctions were abolished, and all men were given access to God through the faith and hope of Jesus. The Gentile Christians were made fellow-heirs with the prophets and apostles to the inheritance among the saints in light. Paul urges upon these Christians steadfastness of character and holiness of life in this strong appeal, "And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unreprouvable in His sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." (Col. 1: 21, 23.) The least that can be said of this "hope of the gospel" is that it is a hope for all the gospel promises for life and glory. While the apostles mention particular objects of that hope, these are inseparably associated with the whole glorified life, and the part cannot be enjoyed without obtaining the whole. It involves all the possible attainments of divine grace, the excellencies of Christian character, and eternal felicity in the triumphant kingdom of heaven. All the realities of "the hope of the gospel" are assured to us by personal unity and harmony with the indwelling Christ. "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of this glory among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory." (Col. 1: 26, 27.) Therefore, the reality of this hope is not a matter of speculation, a question of theory, or a statement of theological dogma, but of actual personal experience with every one who is living by faith in "the Lord Jesus

Christ, who is our hope." (1 Tim. 1:1.) Without Jesus the world would be hopeless. The assurance of being saved can come to mankind only by His gospel. "For we are saved by hope." (Rom. 8:24.) The salvation here held in view is not the initial pardon and adoption by the Spirit, but the final "adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Therefore, the hope by which we are saved is the confident expectation that through the resurrection of Christ we shall be raised to glory and eternal life. Thus the hope of ultimate and triumphant salvation keeps the confidence of the Christian centred upon the risen and glorified Jesus for complete victory over "the world, the flesh, and the devil," for time and eternity. "By 'the hope of the gospel' we are supported, and are comfortable in the expectation we have of receiving from the hand of God all the good we need in the troubles and adversities of life, and of having our bodies raised from corruption and death at the general resurrection." (Dr. A. Clark's *Commentary*.) Rooted and grounded in this hope the Christian is kept, "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." (1 Cor. 15:58.) The writer to the Hebrews urged the importance and necessity of the full labor of love and service, that is not forgotten of the righteous God, and expressed the earnest wish "that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful but followers of them who through faith inherit the promises." (Heb. 6:10-12.) In another expressive passage upon "the new and living way" which Jesus our great High Priest hath opened unto us, the writer says, "And having a high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith."

(Heb. 10:22.) John Wesley makes this lucid and profound comment upon the relation of “the full assurance of faith,” and “the full assurance of hope”:  
“The *full assurance of faith* relates to present pardon, *the full assurance of hope* to future glory. The former is the highest *divine evidence* that God is reconciled to me in the Son of His love; the latter is the same *divine evidence* wrought in the soul by the spirit of persevering grace, and of eternal glory. So much and no more as *faith* every moment *beholds with open face*, so much does *hope* see to all eternity. But this assurance is not an opinion, not a bare construction of scripture, but is given by the Holy Ghost; and what none can have for another, but for himself only.” (Wesley’s *Notes on the N. T.*)

This full assurance of faith and hope is founded upon the immutable promises of God. The writer leads up to this wonderful climax emphasizing the perfect security of the person whose “sure and steadfast” anchor, hope, “after patient endurance receives the promised inheritance of God in the eternal haven of rest in the glory land.” He says, “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed with an oath; that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil: whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.” (Heb. 6:18–20.)

It is certain that this hope is not for the return of Jesus to earth to set up a kingdom. The inspired

writer has before him the exalted and glorified Jesus, not as an earthly king, but as a spiritual and heavenly high priest. The scene of His activities is in heaven whither He has entered for us, that He might bring us to God, and give us a place at the right hand of the throne in heaven.

John, the beloved disciple, had this full assurance of hope before him, in all its saving and purifying power, when he wrote, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure." (1 John 3:2-3.) It is the hope of being with Jesus, seeing Him as He is, and sharing with Him the glory of the Father, that transforms the life and makes us like Him in character and spirit. It was for this that Jesus prayed on our behalf. "I pray for them . . . for they are thine." "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them: that they may be one, even as we are one." (John 17:9, 22, 23.) Jesus is therefore called our *hope*, as He is called our *righteousness*, our *peace*, and our *life*, because He has brought to us righteousness, peace, hope, life, and from these all other blessings proceed.

The full object and consummation of our hope is not a millennial kingdom on earth, but the triumphant kingdom in heaven. Paul's thanksgiving for the faith and devotion of the Colossian Christians is, "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and the love which ye have to all the saints; for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven." (Col. 1:5.) Here, then, the object of hope is heaven, and all that heaven connotes to the devout, praying Christian. Peter grips this fact and elaborates it in such a manner that there is no mistaking his meaning. He writes, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us who are kept by the power of God unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Pet. 1:3-5.)

This passage is worthy careful analysis. By "begotten us again unto a lively, or living hope," Peter evidently had in view the experience of himself and fellow disciples at the crucifixion and burial of Jesus. Their hope of the restoration of the kingdom of Israel under the Messiah was crucified and buried with Jesus in Joseph's tomb. But when these disciples saw their Lord alive after the resurrection, their hope was begotten again, and so enlarged and clarified that they got a new vision of Jesus and His redemptive glory. When they saw Him ascend into heaven their affection and hope were lifted from earth to the glories at the right hand of God. It was similar to the transferred interest of the parents whose beloved child is promoted to glory. Heaven has a new fascination. The exaltation of Jesus begat again in those disciples a living, transforming, and inspiring hope "to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, re-

served in heaven for us who are kept by the power of faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time."

This rebirth of the dead hope was also a rebirth to a higher spiritual life. Only those can inherit the kingdom of God and enter upon eternal life who are born from above by the Holy Spirit. (John 3:3.) It may then be confidently accepted that Peter was here basing the living hope upon the regeneration of the soul, which is made sure by the resurrection power of Jesus, by which also we are assured of a glorious resurrection from the dead to enter with Jesus into the heavenly home with the Father God.

Surely this brings heaven nearer to us than Dr. Broughton would have us think. Even he does not know when his millennial kingdom will begin; it may be thousands of years in the future. If heaven is not until the end of the millennial kingdom his hope can have no immediate realization. Would not this be a case in which "hope deferred maketh the heart sick"? But "the living hope" of Peter has immediate realization by faith of the inheritance already reserved in heaven for all who are "kept by the power of God through faith."

Paul also looks upon the hope of the gospel as bringing the Christian into virtual possession of the inheritance to be fully enjoyed in heaven with Christ our Lord. To him the departure from this life is to be with Christ. (Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:1-4.) Therefore he explains the hope of the gospel to the Thessalonian Church, that they might not sorrow over those who fall asleep, "even as others which have no hope." (1 Thess. 4:13.) He says, "Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God, even the Father, which hath loved

us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and stablish you in every good word and work." (2 Thess. 2:16, 17.) In both these passages the hope is based upon the resurrection of the dead, and the glorification of the faithful throughout eternity. They already enjoyed pardon and peace with God, but the resurrection and eternal glory were necessarily future. These they had in anticipation and therefore through grace they had already received a good hope of heaven, a well grounded expectation that through Jesus they would enter into this glorious state.

In the epistle to Titus, hope is made prominent; not the hope of an earthly kingdom, but "the hope of eternal life." (Tit. 1:3 and 3:7.) Paul gives as the supreme motive of his apostleship and his aim as a servant of God the promotion of the knowledge of the truth which is after godliness, that all should be made heirs of God according to the hope of eternal life "promised in Christ before the world began" (or the beginning of the age). Jesus set forth the promise and purpose of the gospel as the giving of eternal life to every one that believeth. (John 3:15, 16, 35.) Dr. Adam Clark's note on "the hope of eternal life" is, "In expectation of a state of *being* and *wellbeing* which should last through eternity, when time shall be no more. This includes not only the *salvation* of the *soul* and its eternal beatification, but also the resurrection of the body. This was the point but ill understood and not clearly revealed under the Mosaic law; but it was fully revealed under the gospel and the doctrine illustrated by the resurrection of Christ." (Dr. A. Clark's *Commentary*, Titus 1:3.)

The object of the regenerating power, and justifying

grace of the love and mercy of God is to enable man to realize this "hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:4-7.) This Paul calls a "blessed hope." He says, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Tit. 2:13.) This is a favorite passage of millennialists. They entwine much sentiment around this "blessed hope," and designate it as "the pole star of the church." And yet it is doubtful if Paul intended any reference to the actual coming again of Jesus, second or otherwise. At all events, there is no mention here nor in this whole epistle of the *parousia*, or personal presence of Jesus. It is not really "the glorious appearance of the Great God," but as the Revised Version renders it, "the appearing of the glory." There is also a question as to whether it is this "appearing" that is the "blessed hope." The passage reads, "Looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory." The construction implies that they are two distinct things, or parts of the Christian's experience. In the other references of this epistle it is "the hope of eternal life." Dr. Adam Clark's comment is, "Some think the *blessed hope* and *glorious appearing* are the same thing; but I do not think so. The *blessed hope* refers simply to eternal glorification in general, the *glorious appearing* to the resurrection of the body: for when Christ appears He will change this vile body and make it like unto His own glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself." (Phil. 3:20, 21.) There is certainly nothing in this passage to justify the millennial assumptions. The epistle must be interpreted consistently with itself. As Paul prefaced it with a declaration of the "hope of eternal life," "according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowl-



edging of the truth which is after godliness," and concluded with the assurance of the greatness of this HOPE according to the saving mercy of God, "shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 1: 1-3 and 3: 4-7), we cannot do other than accept this gift of eternal life as "the blessed hope" and "the pole star of the church."

The "hope of eternal life" gives an eternal interest and citizenship in heaven, whither Jesus our forerunner and great High Priest hath entered (Heb. 6: 20) to prepare a place for us, that He "might come again and receive us unto Himself; that where He is, there we may be also." (John 14: 2, 3.) Whether He comes to receive us through the portals of death, or translates us as God did Enoch and Elijah, is not of great consequence. The supreme question is, will we be prepared to meet Him with joy and enter with Him to the great marriage feast, as were the wise virgins? Or will we neglect the all important oil in the vessels with our lamps and be eternally shut out of the heavenly kingdom? It is the danger of this awful fatality that called forth the insistent exhortations from Jesus and the apostles to diligence and prayerful watching for the coming of the Lord. It is evident the apostles expected Jesus to come again in like manner as they saw Him go into heaven. (Acts 1: 11.) This coming, however, is to judge the world. Then, they that believe not the gospel and obey not the truth will be cut off, but the saints will be rewarded for their faithfulness, "with the crown of life that fadeth not away." Therefore, to them that are in Christ Jesus, the coming or day of the Lord will be a jubilee of rejoicing and great glorification. "The Lord is coming to judge the world; every hour that passes on in the lapse of time is ad-

vancing that approach; whatsoever He does is in reference to that event; and whatsoever we do should be in reference to the same. But who in that great day shall give up his accounts with joy? The person only whose heart is established in holiness before God, that is, so as to bear the eye and strict scrutiny of his Judge." (Dr. A. Clark, 1 Cor. 4: 5.) Therefore, "judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."

The confident expectation of the divine approval at that day, which is even now attested to the true disciple of Jesus by the full assurance of faith and hope, inspires the soul with a devotion and praise born of the Holy Spirit. Even the trial of faith, through temptation and sorrow, which is more precious than of gold that perisheth, prepares the faithful for that day, that they "might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen they love; in whom, though now they see Him not yet believing they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls." (1 Pet. 1: 7-9.)

This great consummation so filled with "praise, and honor and glory," is the time when "The Son of Man *will* come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him and shall sit upon the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another as the shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on the right hand, and the goats on the left. Then shall the King say to them on His right hand, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you

from the foundation of the world.' ” (Matt. 25:31–33.)

There will be no slips in that judgment. Every person will receive a just recompense of reward, for “ God shall judge the secrets of men according to *the* gospel.” (Rom. 2:1–16.) Hence Paul’s fervent prayer: “ The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it.” (1 Thess. 5:23.)

Throughout the scriptures the highest hope held out to man is a perfect salvation from sin, a full restoration to the likeness and fellowship of God through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, and eternal joy and felicity in heaven with Christ our Saviour at the right hand of the throne of glory. This transcendent rapture of heaven is described under manifold figures, and in the most glowing poetical and apocalyptical imagery of which our language is capable. The more we study these exalted pictures, and the exceeding great and precious promises of the glories of heaven to all who believe the gospel, the more deeply we are impressed with the conviction that “ Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” (1 Cor. 2:9.)

By the power of saving grace we are privileged to enjoy in our souls such a satisfying foretaste of the peace, joy, and glory of the heavenly life and fellowship that we are drawn by the everlasting love of God to consecrate our all to the service and praise of our adorable Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

It is this heavenly experience that cheers and sus-

tains the trusting saints through the gloom of the temptations, conflicts, and sorrows of this world. They know that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. 4:18.)

This faith and hope in the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest possible incentive to holiness. It inspires the strongest courage in the face of danger. It sustains loyalty in the performance of duty. It fans the embers of holy love and devotion into a consuming flame of evangelistic zeal, so that with wonderful cheerfulness God's ambassadors carry the Glad Tidings "even unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

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